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*Alphonse Marie de Ségur*

*1125. a. 11*

# LIVES

OF

ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

ST. FRANCIS DE GIROLAMO

ST. JOHN JOSEPH OF THE CROSS

ST. PACIFICUS OF SAN SEVERINO

AND

ST. VERONICA GIULIANI:

WHOSE

**Canonization took place**

ON

TRINITY SUNDAY, MAY 26TH, 1839.



LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY C. DOLMAN, 61, NEW BOND STREET,

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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It has been deemed advisable to present to the public an account of the lives and virtues of the five Saints, whose Canonization took place on Trinity Sunday, 26th May, 1839. This account has been extracted from the following works, published by the postulators to whom the cause of their beatification or canonization were entrusted, and who have been in possession of the original documents used on these occasions.

1. ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI, from *Vita di S. Alfonso Maria de Liguori, &c.* Rome, 1839.
2. ST. FRANCIS DE GIROLAMO, from *Vita del B. Francesco di Girolamo, scritta dal Padre Longaro degli Oddi S. J.* Rome, 1806.
3. ST. JOHN JOSEPH OF THE CROSS, from *Compendio della Vita di S. Giangiuseppe della Croce, data in Luce dal Postulatore della Causa.* Rome, 1838.
4. ST. PACIFICUS OF SAN SEVERINO, from *Compendio della Vita del B. Pacifico.* Rome, 1786.
5. ST. VERONICA GIULIANI, from *Vita della B. Veronica Giuliani, scritta da Filippo Maria Salvatori.* Rome, 1803.



## INTRODUCTION.

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WE propose to give in these few pages an abstract of the processes observed by the Church at various times in canonizing saints, and afterwards to describe the ceremonies observed at the present day in canonizations. In this account we shall closely follow that given by Benedict XIV in his great work, *De Servorum Dei Beatificatione et Beatorum Canonizatione*, to which the reader is referred for fuller information upon each point, as well as for the proofs of what we advance.

The most ancient form of canonization is that which concerns the honours paid to the martyrs in the early ages of the Church. In the apostolic age, we have an exact description of the practice followed by the Church after the death of St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp, from which we gather, *first*, that veneration was decreed, and a day set apart in honour of the martyr; *secondly*, we learn the quality of this veneration; "we honour the martyrs as the disciples and imitators of the Lord," which was styled *martyri communicare*; *thirdly*, we see that the relics of the martyr were honoured by the faithful; "we carefully collected his bones," says the letter of the Church of Smyrna, recording the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, "as

being more precious than gems, and more pure than gold ; and deposited them in a fit place, at which we pray God to enable us to assemble to celebrate the day of his birth by martyrdom, in order both to preserve the memory of those who have passed through this glorious conflict, and to teach and confirm posterity by their example." The same practice prevailed in succeeding ages, as we learn from Origen, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, St. Basil, St. Optatus, and other Fathers.

The Church was extremely cautious and rigorous in examining the genuineness of the acts of martyrdom, as early as the time of St. Clement. That Pope and his successors, St. Fabian and St. Anterus, appointed seven notaries, one in each district of the city of Rome, to collect the acts of the martyrs, and St. Fabian appointed subdeacons to inspect their proceedings and provide for the correctness of the acts.

When the acts had been collected, an examination took place, to inquire whether the deceased had died in the unity of the Church ; if his motives had been pure, free from vanity, &c. ; and if the cause of his death had been in defence of the faith. The right of pronouncing the ecclesiastical sentence consequent upon this examination, belonged to the bishop of the diocese ; but in Africa, it was usually reserved to the primate, at the head of a council. Circular letters were then addressed to the other Churches throughout the world, to communicate the acts to them. Several ancient records testify that from a very early period it was usual to send information to the pope in such cases, and request his approval of the veneration which the petitioners were

desirous of having paid to the saint. The veneration of confessors did not prevail at such an early epoch as that of the martyrs, but the same careful scrutiny into their claims to such honour, and the subsequent confirmation of the ecclesiastical sentence by the pope, is attested by ancient canons and the acts of the solemn translation of their relics; from which Benedict XIV concludes, that each bishop formerly possessed the right of decreeing the *beatification*, so to speak, of a confessor, which became a *canonization*,\* when adopted by the rest of the Church, with the consent, tacit or expressed, of the pope. At last, Alexander III reserved this right to the holy see, by whom alone it has ever since been exercised.

During the middle ages we find the five following methods adopted:—1. The popes pronounced the decrees for the canonization of saints in minor or general councils, or with the advice of the fathers of the councils *out of* the council themselves. 2. At the same time, the popes often issued such decrees with the assistance of cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, without the intervention of a council. 3. After the whole process or examinations taken in the cause had been submitted to certain auditors of the rota, called the pope's chaplains, or to other pious and learned persons, it was laid before the pope's consistory, in which the final decision was pronounced. 4. Besides the previous examination by

\* The chief differences between beatification and canonization are, that the former is generally confined to a particular diocese, religious order or province, &c., while the latter extends to the whole world: the former is permitted, (not simply tolerated,) the latter is enjoined to the faithful.

the auditors of the rota, the process was examined by a cardinal, and afterwards by the consistory. 5. Instead of one, three cardinals, one from each order,—a cardinal-deacon, priest, and bishop,—were substituted.

In 1587, Sixtus V established the Congregation of Rites, ordaining that, in addition to other duties, it should take cognizance of all causes respecting canonizations, before they could be brought before the *general* consistory, composed of all the cardinals, archbishops, and bishops, at the court of Rome. But in the cause of B. Didacus, in the following year, the same pope adopted a middle course between the ancient and present practice, by naming eight cardinals, assisted by theologians and canonists, to perform the duties which are now reserved to the Congregation of Rites. The Congregation consists of a cardinal-prefect and a body of cardinals, who undertake the office of reporters (*ponentes*) of the cause to the Congregation; a prothonotary, secretary, the *promoter* and *subpromoter* of the faith, consultants, auditors of the rota, advocates, physicians, surgeons, an archivist, and interpreters of the processes, if they happen to be written in a foreign idiom. The duty of the secretary is to prepare reports upon each case, submit them to the pope, and publish the decrees issued by his holiness at each stage of the proceedings. The other offices will be hereafter explained.

The holy see has ever been most rigid in the investigation of the merits of the causes submitted to it. Passing over the proofs that might be collected from earlier times, we confine ourselves to the practice at present observed, according to the rules laid down for the

guidance of the Congregation of Rites by Urban VIII, in 1625, 1634, 1642; and by succeeding popes since his time.

Causes of beatification or canonization regard either martyrs or confessors; some of these were introduced before the publication of the decrees of Urban VIII, others since that time; some again are introduced in the ordinary way, styled *via non-cultus*; others form extraordinary exceptions, and are said to be introduced *per viam extraordinariam casus excepti*. Of the two last only it is necessary to speak.

The holy see never receives or entertains any cause, unless it can first be proved that the subject of it enjoys a reputation for sanctity and miracles, and that no public veneration (*cultus publicus*) has been paid to him. On this account the whole cause is said to be introduced *per viam non-cultus*. The ordinary of the diocese from which the cause is brought to Rome, draws up, in virtue of his own authority, two processes, in which he pronounces that the deceased servant of God enjoys this reputation, and that the decrees of Urban VIII, forbidding public honours to be given without leave from the holy see, have been complied with.

As soon as these processes reach Rome, the postulators of the cause, (who are appointed by the parties who are anxious to obtain the beatification or canonization,) humbly petition the Congregation of Rites to allow them to be opened. The promoter of the faith is summoned, and in the presence of the cardinal-prefect of the Congregation, the processes are opened, and witnesses are called to prove the genuineness of the seals and signatures attached to them.



The next step is to obtain from the pope the appointment of one of the cardinals of the Congregation, to fill the place of reporter or *ponent*. If the servant of God has left any writings, they are carefully revised and examined, and if the Congregation pronounces that they contain nothing to arrest the progress of the inquiry, the *signing of the commission* for taking up the cause by the pope's authority may take place, provided that ten years have elapsed since the delivery of the ordinary processes to the Congregation.

The Congregation next addresses remissorial letters to three bishops (the presence of two of whom during the drawing up of the process is always requisite), whose dioceses are in the neighbourhood of the place where the processes are to be compiled, instructing them to draw up a process, by apostolic authority from the pope, containing proofs that the deceased possesses a reputation for sanctity and miracles *in general*. If this process be approved by the Congregation, other remissorials are sent, ordering the delegates to receive evidence on each virtue and miracle in particular, and to forward them to Rome. This last process is opened with the same solemnity as before, and its validity being proved, the Congregation proceeds to examine the virtues and miracles in detail, provided that fifty years have elapsed since the death of the servant of God. This examination is made in three different meetings; the first, called *anti-preparatory*, takes place in the palace of the cardinal-reporter, and is attended by the consultants or confidential advisers of the Congregation, who are very numerous, and by the masters of ceremonies. The former alone give their votes, and the object of this meeting

seems to be for the purpose of instructing the cardinal reporter in the merits and difficulties of the case, before he reports upon it to the whole Congregation. The second examination, called *preparatory*, takes place in the pope's palace, before the entire body of cardinals composing the congregation, the consultors, and masters of ceremonies; and on this occasion, when the meeting is for the purpose of instructing the cardinals, the consultors alone vote. The *general* congregation is then held in the presence of the pope; but both the cardinals and consultors give their votes. The examination is proposed in the form of a doubt, whether the servant of God possessed the theological and cardinal virtues in a heroical degree; and until this doubt has been favourably resolved, the question respecting the miracles said to have been wrought through his intercession, cannot be entertained. After receiving the votes of the cardinals and consultors, the pope defers pronouncing his decision, and requests them in the mean time to join with him in prayer to implore the light of God upon his deliberations; and some time afterwards, having formed his determination, he summons the cardinal-reporter, the secretary and promoter of the faith, and orders the decree to be published, containing his approval of the virtues of the deceased, in this form,—*Constat de virtutibus theologalibus et cardinalibus earumque annexis in gradu heroico in casu et ad effectum de quo agitur*. Thus, Benedict XIV closed his glorious career on earth, by ordering the decree approving the virtues of St. Francis de Girolamo upon his death-bed, after he had received the holy sacrament of extreme

unction. The miracles reported to have been performed through the intercession of the servant of God, are next examined in three congregations, as before ; and after again delaying until he has implored the assistance and light of God, the pope issues a second decree, approving one or more of the miracles proposed to the general congregation. The farther question is also proposed, in another general congregation, whether, seeing that the miracles and virtues of the servant of God have been approved, it be safe to proceed to his beatification ? It is required that in every case two-thirds of the suffrages be in favour of the cause, otherwise it cannot be proceeded with. At every stage the promoter of the faith must be consulted, and it is his duty to bring forward every objection that he thinks fit *against* the proofs of the virtues and miracles of the servant of God ; and for this purpose he must be furnished with all the depositions and informations taken in the cause. His arguments are stated in writing, and the advocates employed in the cause prepare their reply. The relations of the miracles are submitted to physicians and surgeons, who deliver in writing their opinion, whether the facts related could have been produced by natural means.

When all these doubts have been satisfactorily removed, the pope appoints a day for the solemn beatification of the servant of God, who then receives the title of *Beatus* (*bienheureux*, or *blessed*).

By the "extraordinary way of exception," as it is called, Urban VIII allowed the causes of saints to be introduced, who had already received public veneration, provided that they had been publicly honoured from

time immemorial, by apostolic indult, or in the writings of the fathers and saints of the Church. In these cases the ordinary pronounces that the deceased enjoys a reputation for sanctity and miracles, and that the veneration paid to him has subsisted from time immemorial. If this veneration is approved by the congregation, the servant of God is deemed *equivalently beatified*.

As soon as there is reason to believe that additional miracles have been wrought since the beatification of the servant of God, the postulators humbly petition the congregation of rites to obtain the signing of the commission for resuming the cause, and the expediting of fresh remissorials to the same or other delegates, instructing them to receive evidence of the miracles reported to have taken place. This process, when sent to Rome, is examined with the same rigour and exactness, in three congregations, as before; and if the decision is favourable, the final question is proposed,—whether, after the approval of the miracles, it be safe to proceed to the canonization? Two miracles are required before beatification, and two more, which have taken place since that time, before canonization. After these three congregations have pronounced their opinion, the decree is issued, to the effect that the canonization may safely take place. Fresh prayers are addressed to the pope from different nations and sovereigns, to induce him to perform the solemn rite of canonization. As soon as the time has been determined, the pope summons a secret consistory of the cardinals, to whom a summary of the virtues and miracles of the saint has previously been submitted. A summary is also read in the consistory,

and each cardinal answers *placet*, or *non placet*, when his vote is asked. A public consistory is afterwards held, and public prayers ordered; and finally, a *semi-public* consistory, at which all the cardinals, patriarchs, and bishops, in Rome, attend, and each gives his vote upon the cause. The day for the solemn canonization is announced, when the ceremony is performed, which we shall now proceed to decribe.

Before the time of Benedict XIV, saints were canonized indiscriminately in various cities. Thus the canonization of St. Edmund of Canterbury, by Innocent IV, took place at Lyons (1248), and that of St. Thomas of Aquino, by John XXII, at Avignon (1248). Nor was it performed at Rome in the Church of St. Peter's *exclusively*, but that pontiff, by his bull *Ad sepulchra apostolorum* (1741), decreed that, for the future, all beatifications and canonizations should be performed in St. Peter's.

The day having been fixed for the ceremony, an edict is published, declaring it, for that year, a holiday of obligation, if it be not one already. Long beforehand, a prelate is appointed by his holiness to preside over, and regulate, with the assistance of the respective postulators and the masters of the ceremonies, the expenses and details of the decorations of the church, and the arrangements for the function; and a cardinal is named to the office of procurator of the canonization. When the day arrives, a solemn procession of all the secular and regular clergy of Rome, differing in a few respects from that of *Corpus Christi*, goes from the Vatican palace round the colonnade to the principal door of St. Peter's. Lighted tapers are borne by all, the standards of the

new saints are carried, and the clergy, with the exception of those belonging to the patriarchal and minor basilicas, do not enter the church, but take their station within the colonnade, in this order:—At a proper distance, those who walk first in the procession divide, and take their stand on either side, suffering those who follow to pass between them in succession, and arrange themselves in such manner, that the last in the procession, but the first in dignity, are stationed close to the door of the church, and the procession stands *inversely* in the very same order in which it left the Vatican. The chapters of the minor basilicas, and next those of St. John Lateran, and St. Mary Major, enter the church, and range themselves similarly in two lines towards the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, while the chapter of St. Peter's remains without, to receive the pope.

While the procession is thus disposing itself, the pontiff intones the *Ave Maris Stella* in the Sistine chapel in the Vatican palace, and, vested in cope and mitre, ascends the chair of state, when two large wax tapers, richly decorated, together with a smaller one, are presented to him by the cardinal-procurator of the canonization. The two former are usually transferred, by order of his holiness, to the princes assisting at the throne; the third, wrapped in an embroidered veil, is borne by the pope himself. The procession then advances in the following order, all bearing lighted tapers, and the choir singing the *Ave Maris Stella*. The officers of the papal chapel, the chaplains, chamberlains, generals of religious orders, &c. are succeeded by an acolyte bearing the censer, and seven others with can-

dles. The auditor of the rota, who officiates as subdeacon at the high mass, walks between the subdeacon and deacon, who are to sing the epistle and gospel in Greek. The pontiff, who is immediately preceded by the two senior cardinal-deacons, having between them the cardinal who is to sing the gospel, and by the princes before-mentioned, is surrounded by the noble and Swiss guards and the mace-bearers ; and the highest officers of state close the procession.

The august temple of St. Peter's derives, if possible, additional splendour and magnificence from the rich hangings and illuminations with which it is decorated. In the *presbytery* or sanctuary, beyond the *Confession*, or tomb of the holy apostles SS. Peter and Paul, are seen pendant in the air the standards of the saints. The custom of displaying these ensigns in the church is ascribed by Papebroch to the following prodigy :—At the canonization of St. Stanislas, M. Bishop of Cracow, when Innocent IV had pronounced the sentence, as it is called, there appeared in the air, supported by angels, a purple standard, and in the middle thereof, a bishop in his pontificals ; the colour denoting his martyrdom, and the red his dignity.

On arriving at the altar of the blessed sacrament, the pope descends from his chair, and kneels for a short space in adoration, and then, reascending his chair, is borne to the throne, where he receives the customary homage of the cardinals, bishops, and others. All being at length arranged in their places, a master of ceremonies conducts to the throne the cardinal-procurator, attended on his left by a consistorial advocate, who on

his knees thus prays his holiness, in the name of the said cardinal, to admit the subjects who are to be canonized into the catalogue of saints :—" The most reverend Cardinal *N.*, here present, *earnestly (instante)* petitions your Holiness to enrol among Christ's saints, &c. *N.N.*" The secretary of briefs replies in behalf of his holiness, that the matter being of exceeding moment, it behoveth first to implore fervently the throne of Divine grace, and to invoke the intercession of the Holy Mother of God, and the holy apostles, and the other saints. The cardinal then returns to his place, and the pope descending from the throne, kneels down at the foot of it, while two of the choir chant the Litany of the Saints, the rest answering. Then all rise up and take their seats, and the pope ascends his throne. The cardinal-procurator returns, and the consistorial advocate repeats the petition in the following manner : " The most reverend Cardinal *N.*, &c. *earnestly and more earnestly (instante et instantius)* petitions your holiness, &c." The secretary of briefs answers in terms similar to those used before, and the pope kneels, while the cardinal-assistant on his left hand admonishes all to pray again, by the word *Orate* ; and all falling on their knees, pray in silence, until the other assistant-cardinal, on his right hand, bids them rise, *Levate*. Then, all standing, the pope intones, the *Veni Creator* ; then, kneeling again till the first verse is finished, rises and remains standing till the hymn is concluded. The prayer is then sung by the pope, who afterwards ascends his throne, and, for the third time, the cardinal returns, and the consistorial advocate repeats the request in still stronger terms. " Holy



father, the most reverend Cardinal *N. earnestly, more earnestly, and most earnestly* petitions, &c. (*instante, instantius, instantissime.*) The secretary now replies that his holiness, being satisfied that God approves the request, has at length resolved to pronounce the definitive sentence, which, by virtue of the 'supreme power given him, he does in the following manner: "To the honour of the holy and undivided Trinity, the exaltation of the Catholic faith and increase of Christianity,—by the authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and our own, after a mature deliberation, repeated invocation of the Divine succour, and the counsel of our venerable brethren, the cardinals of the holy Roman Church, the patriarchs, and archbishops dwelling in the city,—we declare the blessed *N. N.* to be saints, and enrol them in the catalogue of saints, enjoining the universal Church devoutly to worship their memory yearly upon their natal day; to wit, the blessed *N.* on the day, &c. In the name of the ✠ Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy ✠ Ghost, Amen."

As soon as Christ's vicar upon earth has delivered this solemn decision, the consistorial advocate declares the cardinal-procurator's acceptance of it; and, returning thanks to the pontiff, beseeches his holiness to order the apostolic letters to be expedited. To which the pope replies, in one word, "*Decernemus, we decree.*" The cardinal-procurator, ascending the steps of the throne, kisses the hand and knee of the pope; and the consistorial-advocate, turning to the apostolic prothonotaries, desires them to frame one or more instruments

of the solemn act of canonization: the senior prothonotary makes answer, "*Conficiemus, we will frame them;*" and then turning to those who surround the throne of the pope, calls upon them to bear witness, in these words—" *vobis testibus.*" The pope, standing up, intones the *Te Deum*, which is chaunted by the pontifical choir. At the same moment, the sound of trumpets and the bells of the basilica announce the joyous intelligence to the city, which is echoed and re-echoed by the sound of drums, the thunders of artillery from the castle, and the pealing of the bells of the Capitol and of every church in Rome, which continue ringing for the space of an hour.

The first who invokes the newly canonized by the title of saint is the cardinal-deacon, assisting at the right hand of the pontiff. For, at the conclusion of the *Te Deum*, he chaunts "*Orate pro nobis S.S. N. N.*" The choir responds, and the pope sings the prayer. The cardinal-deacon, who has to sing the gospel at mass, going to the left hand of the pontiff, recites the *Confiteor*, adding, after the invocation of the holy apostles, the names of the new saints. When this is concluded, the auditor of the Rota, who officiates as sub-deacon, comes before the throne with the cross, and the pope gives his benediction, adding, in the prayer *Precibus et meritis Beatæ Mariæ semper Virginis, &c.*, after the names of S.S. Peter and Paul, those of the saints newly canonized. Here, strictly speaking, concludes the ceremony. The high mass, which follows, is not an essential part thereof, nor is it necessarily sung by the pontiff. The only points in which it differs from

the usual papal high mass are, that the collect of the new saints is joined to that of the day ; and the pope, after the gospel has been sung in Greek and Latin, delivers a homily, and gives a plenary indulgence to all present at the function, and another of seven years and seven *quadrages* (forty days) to such as may visit the shrines of the saints on their annual feast. The last peculiar circumstance consists in the oblation made at the offertory, or immediately after the canonization, if the pope should not celebrate high mass. These consist of wax-candles, loaves, and small barrels of wine, of turtle-doves, pigeons, and other kinds of birds. They are presented, on behalf of the postulators, by the cardinal-procurator and the cardinal of the congregation of rites, three in each cause ; to wit a cardinal-bishop, a cardinal-priest, and a cardinal-deacon of the said congregation ; and in default of so many cardinal-bishops as there are saints, by cardinal-priests in their stead ; or if the congregation cannot supply the requisite number, it is made up from the senior cardinals of the sacred college. The offerings, which are presented with great solemnity and ceremony, are, as follow, for each saint : Two large wax-candles of forty-five pounds weight each, beautifully decorated with effigies of the saint, are carried by two attendants of the cardinal-bishop, who follows them. A smaller taper, and a cage, containing two pigeons, are borne by the postulator of the cause, and another member of the order to which the saint belonged, or of the community which has moved the cause. Two loaves, one gilded, the other silvered, with the armorial bearings of the pontiff represented

upon them, are carried upon two dishes, of wood, silvered. The cardinal-priest follows, and two other religious, or seculars, according to the order to which the saint belonged, carrying a small taper, and a cage containing two turtle-doves. The cardinal-deacon succeeds,—two barrels of wine, one gilded, the other silvered, being carried before him; and, lastly, two other religious, or seculars, with a taper, and a cage, containing divers kinds of birds. The cardinal-bishop presents the large tapers; the cardinal-procurator the smaller ones; the cardinal-priest, the bread; the cardinal-deacon, the wine; and, finally, the cardinal-procurator, the different kinds of birds, each kissing the hand of the pope. The same order and ceremony are observed in presenting the offerings of the other saints; and, when all are finished, the pope goes on with the mass. At its conclusion, the pontiff sits in his chair of state, with his tiara on his head, and receives from the cardinal-arch-priest of the Basilica, a purse, embroidered with gold, containing twenty-five crowns, such being the custom whenever the pope sings mass.

The offerings, which occupy so conspicuous a part in this interesting function, and which we have described with a detail that may seem tediously minute, appear deserving of attention, when we consider their import and signification. Wherefore it may not be superfluous to subjoin a brief account of their origin and meaning. Cain and Abel and Noah, obeying a natural impulse, made offerings to God of what they possessed; they were prescribed by Almighty God himself in the old law. The early Christians brought offerings to the feet

of the apostles; and from Christian antiquity we learn that the custom was continued in the Church, so that the part of the mass, at which the people were wont to bring their offerings to the altar, came to be called "the offertory." To avoid confusion, a capitulary of Charlemagne ordered these gifts to be presented without the rails of the sanctuary, and, in process of time, to avoid farther inconveniences, money came to be substituted for them. Hence the stipend which the priest receives for saying mass.\* Still the primitive custom did not totally cease, for authors make mention of such offerings presented to the pope at Easter or other festivals, when he celebrated in the great churches, at the stational churches, or at ordinations. Even now it is the custom to offer wax-tapers at ordinations, and bread and wine at the consecration of bishops. Those which we have described as being peculiar to the ceremonial of canonization are of very high antiquity, and their mystical import is explained by several authors in nearly the same terms. The custom of using and of ornamenting wax is most ancient in the Church, as Baronius proves. That it was used to burn before the martyrs' tombs, in token of homage and respect, St. Jerome testifies. According to some writers, it is an emblem of the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ,† and the paschal candle may be considered as a type of our divine Saviour risen again, and conversing for forty days with his disciples.‡

\* Vid. Moretti de Ritu dandi presbyterium. Part 1, Sect. 1 and 2.

† Amalar. De Eccl. Offic. lib. i. c. 18.

‡ De Festis, lib. i. c. 8, n. 55.

Jesus Christ himself called his apostles "*the light of the world,*" (Matt. v.) and St. John the Baptist "*a burning and a shining light.*" In the function of canonization, the wax-tapers may not inaptly denote the joy He feels in holding up these new lights to the admiration and instruction of mankind. The virgin wax is a type of their spotless innocence; its vivid flame of the holy fire of charity. Finally, it represents the vigilance with which, like the wise virgins holding their lamps burning in their hands, they awaited the coming of the heavenly bridegroom.

The early Christians offered bread for the sacrifice, and for the use of the priests. Bread is the support of life. In acknowledgment to God for this good gift, the shew-bread was kept, according to some authors, among the Jews. Melchisedech's offering was of thanksgiving for victory. Thus, in the present instance, it may be considered as a thanksgiving to God on the part of the Church for the acquisition of so many new heroes, protectors, and models. *Wine* was sprinkled over victims. It was associated with bread in the sacrifice of Melchisedech, and is still joined with it in that divine sacrifice, which this prefigured. The *dove* is the harbinger of peace. Here it announces the peace of the blessed. The dove is the symbol also of the Holy Ghost. The simplicity of the dove was the character to which the apostles were to aspire. The Church is addressed in the Canticle of Canticles, under the figure of a dove. Lastly, the dove is the emblem of a meditative mind. It is likewise a most apt symbol of religious solitude. The birds of divers kinds, all hover on the wing, and are

ever soaring upwards, like a soul aspiring after heaven. In a word, these material figures are mystical emblems, by which the Church would give us a sense and apprehension of sublime mysteries. They point out to our imitation the virtues of the saints. With our own Venerable Bede, therefore, may we exclaim. "These are the foot-prints, which the saints returning to our common country have left for our guidance, that treading diligently therein we may attain to bliss."\*

\* Serm. XVIII. de Sanctis. This account of the Ceremonial of the Canonization has been abridged from that published by Amici at Rome, and reprinted last year.

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# LIVES OF THE SAINTS.

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## ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI,

BISHOP OF ST. AGATHA DE' GOTI,  
FOUNDER OF THE REDEMPTORISTS.

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1696—1787.

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AMONGST those illustrious men, whose writings have unfolded the mysteries of the divine attributes, or explained the principles and practice of Christian morality, there have not been wanting many in whose lives was exemplified the pure and holy system of conduct, which their works unfolded for the imitation and guidance of other men. Thus are the angelic St. Thomas, and the seraphic doctor St. Bonaventure, the best models wherein to study and explain that system of virtue and perfection, which they have traced in their works; and thus also, while St. Alphonsus Liguori is celebrated throughout the world for his theological writings, his heroic virtues and extraordinary sanctity prove how close was the connexion between the wisdom of his understanding and the purity of

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his heart. And as the example of St. Francis of Sales and St. Anselm of Canterbury show how great learning and profound study may be united with the vigilant and active discharge of pastoral duties, even so were they blended in the saint of whom we are about to speak.

He was born on the feast of SS. Cosmas and Damian, in the year 1696, at Marianella, near Naples, and was baptized by the names of Alphonsus Mary on St. Michael's day following. Not many days afterwards, the venerable St. Francis de Girolamo, whose virtues will be described in another place, coming into his father's house, blessed the infant; and turning to his mother, said, "This child will live to an exceeding old age, he will not die before his ninetieth year, he will be bishop, and will do great things for Jesus Christ." How the event confirmed this prediction, we shall soon see. He was instructed by his excellent mother in the practice of virtue and the knowledge of the divine law, and by his obedience, docility, and piety, fully corresponded to her fondest desires. Amongst his companions he was affectionate and modest; and to his elders, he was respectful and obedient. So eagerly did he apply to the study of canon and civil law, for the profession of which his father had destined him, and so great was his progress, that a dispensation of three years and some months was necessary to enable him to pass his examination

for the degree of doctor in both, as he was only in his sixteenth year (1713.) The pursuit of these sciences did not diminish his devotion especially towards Our Lord, present in the eucharist, and his virgin mother, and he daily visited the church in which the devotion of the Forty Hours was performed, during which the blessed sacrament is exposed, amid great splendour, to the veneration of the faithful. On these occasions, he was conspicuous for his regular attendance, his recollection and fervour, and he kept his eyes fixed constantly on the object of his love; so that three ecclesiastics, who were accustomed to frequent the same churches, were moved by a holy envy to imitate the surpassing piety of the young cavalier, whose name they for a long time sought in vain to discover. He adopted likewise the habit of visiting the Hospital of the Incurables, towards whom he discharged all the duties of charity which they required, with such affection and kindness, that it was easy to see that, in their persons, he honoured Jesus Christ himself as present. He carefully avoided the company of persons of the other sex, and fled from every thing that could taint the virginal innocence of his soul; and never, except when forced by his father, visited the theatre or other places of amusement, although he took great delight in spending the evening in the society of certain men of learning who met at the house of one of his friends. His ex-

ample had such a powerful effect upon a slave, who was his servant, that he resolved to become a Christian at any cost, and died some time afterwards in sentiments of extraordinary piety.

He embraced the profession of the law, and rose in a short time to such eminence, that the most difficult and most intricate cases were confided to him from every part of the kingdom. But he did not allow his zeal for his clients, or his diligence in his pursuits, to seduce his mind from the most upright justice, or from the practice of the most exemplary virtue. He heard mass every morning before going to the court, and punctually observed all the fasts and other precepts of the Church. He went to the sacraments every eight days, and did not fail every year, by a spiritual retreat, to amend the failings of the past twelvemonth, and renew the fervour of his good resolutions.

The favour with which the emperor Charles VI, who at that time governed Naples, regarded his family, and the high forensic honours to which he was likely to rise, induced the first families to desire an alliance with him by marriage. A sermon which he heard about this time, in which a description was given of a cavalier who had been condemned to hell, and had appeared afterwards to a lady of his acquaintance, created a strong sensation in the whole audience, and especially in Alphonsus, who thereupon gave himself up more than

ever to God, visited the hospital more frequently, and formed the resolution never again to go to the theatre, and to attend every day the devotion of the Forty Hours, which he punctually put in practice. But the following circumstance fixed his determination of totally abandoning all worldly pursuits. In a feudal suit between two powerful princes he had been retained for the defence. He spent a whole month in preparing his proofs and studying the case, and when the trial came on, he gained the applause and suffrages of the immense audience whom the importance of the cause, and his reputation, had drawn together. The president was on the point of pronouncing a decision in his favour, when the opposing counsel, instead of attempting to reply, begged him with a smile to re-examine the process. He consented, without the slightest hesitation, trusting to the force and clearness with which he had maintained his case; but what was his surprise, when he discovered in the process a simple negative particle, which he had not before noticed, but which totally destroyed the whole groundwork of his argument. Accustomed as he was to undertake his causes with the most scrupulous sincerity, he was abashed and confounded with the apprehension, lest the fault should be ascribed to him, but the audience unanimously acquitted him, and the president endeavoured to cheer and encourage him, by observing, that in the

ardour of defence and the desire of success, such oversights often occur to the most upright men. But his countenance was immediately covered with shame and confusion, and after having honestly confessed that he had been mistaken, and begged pardon of the court, he modestly took his leave; and as he went out of the court, was heard to say, "Deceitful world, I know thee: thou shalt no longer mislead me." He returned home, and for three days shut himself up in his chamber, and shed many tears before his crucifix. During this time he resolved to quit the profession of the law, and consecrate himself to the ecclesiastical state. He sought the advice of his directors, and they approved of his resolution. But when he requested his father to consent to his desire, he met with nothing but harshness, reproofs and refusals. At last, he obtained his permission to enter the Church, but upon condition that he should not leave home; and even for a whole year following, he refused to speak to him. Thus, at the age of twenty-seven, he fled from all the allurements and distinctions of the world; and the lady to whom he was to have been married, following his example, became a religious in the convent of the Blessed Sacrament in Naples, where she exhibited during life and at her death such proofs of virtue, that the saint afterwards wrote her life.

As the Israelites employed the vessels of the

Egyptians in the worship of God, so did Alphonsus turn all his worldly knowledge and accomplishments to the service of the Church, especially those of music and poetry, for he composed many beautiful airs, for the purpose of instilling a love and admiration of devout songs, in place of the ordinary profane and unbecoming ones in which men usually take delight. In the morning he applied with eagerness to the study of theology and religion, attended all the exercises of piety in the house of the Missionaries of St. Vincent of Paul, and was regular in frequenting the Sacraments. Every afternoon he visited and relieved the sick in the hospital, heard a sermon in the church of the Oratorians, and then went to offer up his devotions to the Blessed Sacrament in the church where it was exposed; and remained there for several hours until it had been replaced in the tabernacle, and then returned home. In the evening he frequented the house of a devout ecclesiastic, where conferences were held on subjects of piety. Moreover, he joined a devout association, whose members, like those of the confraternity of St. John in Rome at the present day, laboured to comfort criminals before their execution, prepare them for death, and attend them to the scaffold. The Cardinal Archbishop of Naples admitted him to the tonsure on the 23rd of September, in 1724, and to the four minor orders on the 23rd of December of the same

year. It was a subject of wonder and edification to the whole city to see one who had moved in so high a circle of rank and honour discharging the most humiliating duties of his new office, and going about the streets to collect the children, and conducting them to the church, where he became as one of them, and laboured to inculcate into them the mysteries and truths of religion; and most of all, during Lent, was he solicitous to prepare them to approach the holy tribunal of penance with proper dispositions at the Easter following.

He received subdeacon's orders in the church of St. Restituta on the 22nd of September, 1725, and immediately afterwards, in order to prepare himself better to labour in the vineyard of the Lord, he entered a congregation, formed for the purpose of giving missions or courses of sermons, for the instruction and improvement of the people in virtue, throughout the kingdom of Naples. His office was to teach catechism to the children; and in a short time his gentleness and meekness so completely won the hearts of all, that they ran after him, as he was departing, and begged him to remain amongst them. On the 6th of April of the following year he was ordained deacon, and at once obtained leave to preach, and delivered his first sermon in his own parish church during the Forty Hours' exposition, in honour of Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament. The fervour and unc-

tion with which he spoke were a source of profit and edification to the faithful, and he was invited to preach first in one church and then in another, particularly during the Forty Hours' prayer. But his unceasing labours soon brought on a dangerous illness, in which his life was saved, when he was at the very point of death, by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin of Mercy, a statue of whom was brought to his bed-side. Immediately upon his recovery, the Cardinal caused him to be ordained priest on St. Thomas the Apostle's day, in the same year, 1726. From that moment his whole life became a continual sermon and exhortation to virtue. From the altar, at which he received the all-strengthening bread of angels, he went forth to preach the law and love of God to the people of the city and kingdom of Naples, producing everywhere wonderful conversions of abandoned and most notorious sinners of both sexes to the practice of the most exemplary virtue. The Cardinal Archbishop, perceiving the fruits of his sermons, obliged him under obedience to hear confessions, although he had been ordained priest but a short time previously. The affection with which he received persons of every rank; his patience in hearing them; his sweetness in warning them and exposing to them the unhappy state of their souls; the tender and touching manner in which he represented to them their ungrateful return for all the



love of so good a God, who had borne with them and waited for their repentance ; and, above all, the unction which, joined to his burning words, found a way to their souls, moved them to a perfect detestation of their sins, and a sincere desire of being fully reconciled to God. Not content with spending a great part of the day, and even of the night, in the confessional, or in preaching in the churches, he for a time assembled the people in the public squares on the evenings of the festivals, and spoke to them of God and spiritual things. But these assemblies being interrupted by the misrepresentations of some who affected to consider them dangerous to the government, Alphonsus with his companions laboured to continue the same good work, which he had begun in public, by going about the city and instructing the poor in their shops and houses, but especially by giving missions in the rural parishes. These missions, which are given throughout the year in all Catholic countries,—as by the Society of Jesus and the Priests of the Mission in Italy, by the former and the Redemptorists in Belgium,—are conducted by a body of priests, deputed by the superior of the order for that purpose. In some places the lord of the manor pays an annual sum to the order, with an agreement that the missions shall be given at regular intervals in the townships over his estate. The fruits of them are visible for many years after-

wards in the exemplary morals and regular frequentation of the sacraments which distinguish the places which the missionaries have visited,—fruits so wonderful and extraordinary, that those who have not witnessed them, or have not read of the success of the first fathers of the Society of Jesus, in Portugal and Spain, and in recent times in Italy and elsewhere, or of the priests of St. Vincent of Paul in France, would find it difficult to believe how a few meditations addressed to congregations composed of persons of every rank and profession of life, could lead to such a total reform in the manners of whole cities and districts, producing reconciliation of enemies, and spreading peace, charity, and piety on every side. In assigning to each of the priests at the beginning of the mission his respective share of labour, the most difficult was always allotted to Alphonsus, whose sermons breathed a spirit of unction and eloquence that stirred his hearers to repentance and compunction, whilst he laboured to adapt every thought and expression to the level of the meanest capacity. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that he was eagerly sought after and invited by the bishops of the different cities in the kingdom of Naples, to preach the mission to their people, and that numerous conversions of sinners long buried in iniquity, and the diffusion of a renewed spirit of faith and piety, everywhere marked his labours.

And his loving patroness, Our blessed Lady, rewarded his zeal in the cause of charity and devotion, by appearing to him in the sight of an immense crowd of people, collected in the church of Foggia, to listen to a discourse upon his favourite subject, the intercession and patronage of Mary. From her countenance a ray of light like that of the sun was reflected upon the face of her devout servant, which was seen by all the people, who cried out, *a miracle! a miracle!* and recommended themselves with great fervour and many tears to the Mother of God; and many women of abandoned life were seized with such intense sorrow, that they mounted upon a platform in the church, and began to discipline themselves and cry aloud for mercy, and then leaving the church, retired to the house of penitents in that city. Alphonsus, in his juridical attestation, deposed, that during the sermon, he, together with the assembled audience, saw the countenance of the Blessed Virgin, resembling that of a girl of fourteen or fifteen years of age, who turned from side to side, as was witnessed by every one present.

Whilst he was preaching the mission in the City of Scala, he was invited by the nuns of a certain convent to preach during the Novena preceding the festival kept in honour of our Lord's crucifixion. Among these religious was one of holy life, and favoured with many supernatural

graces, by name sister Mary Costarosa, who had founded or reformed several convents. One day, while she was in the confessional, conversing with the Saint about spiritual things, she said to him, "God does not wish you to remain at Naples, but calls you to the foundation of a congregation of missionaries, who shall afford spiritual relief to the souls of those, who are now most out of the reach of instruction." These words threw Alphonsus into great affliction and trouble of mind, for he knew not whether such was the will of God, and saw himself surrounded with difficulties, and without companions to aid him in the enterprise. He prayed earnestly to the Father of Lights to illumine his understanding, and make known to him his divine will; and after consulting many persons famous for their discernment of spirits and approved virtue, was persuaded that God intended him to put in execution this design, of founding a new congregation of missionaries. As soon as the report of his intention spread over Naples, there were found many, who, from the fear of losing so zealous a missionary, or from the difficulties that seemed to oppose his undertaking, strongly disapproved of the design. He met with much resistance on the part of the Cardinal Archbishop and several ecclesiastics, who, considering the good effected by his means in Naples, could not be induced to believe that God expected anything more

at his hands. His father assailed him with tears and remonstrances, begging him not to abandon him; and Alphonsus afterwards confessed that this was the most violent temptation he had ever met with during the whole of his life, and that God alone had enabled him to bear up against it. To avoid every other assault, he secretly left Naples in the beginning of November, 1732, and proceeded, with a few companions, to Scala, where the bishop had already invited him to open the first house, and begin the foundation of the order. There he went to live with his companions, in a wretched house, with a small garden belonging to it. He obtained leave to turn one of the rooms into an oratory, in which, upon the ninth of November of that year, after a votive Mass of the Holy Ghost had been sung with the *Te Deum*, in thanksgiving for the graces already received, he laid the foundation of the new congregation, then styled of our blessed Saviour, whose members were to employ themselves in preaching and carrying the comforts of religion to the poor peasants, who, living in scattered huts over the country, or in the small villages and hamlets, are often deprived of the benefits of instruction and the frequentation of the sacraments. His first companions were twelve in number, ten priests and two advocates, not yet admitted to orders, besides one lay-brother, who served them, by name Vitus Curzio,

a rich gentleman of Acquaviva; who, having renounced all his worldly substance, in consequence of a vision which he had at Naples, chose this humble employment in the new order. The life of these first fathers has been justly compared to that of the holy penitents described by St. John Climacus in his mystic Ladder. Their house was small and inconvenient, their beds a mere sack of straw resting upon the floor; and their only food, in general, was a dish of soup, which was both insipid and disagreeable, with a small quantity of fruit. The bread was black and not even leavened, through the inexperience of the lay-brother who made it, and so hard that it was necessary to pound it in a mortar before they could eat it. This miserable food, which they eat kneeling or stretched upon the ground, they rendered still more nauseous, by sprinkling it over with some bitter stuff, and many of them, before eating, licked the floor with their tongue. They disciplined themselves three times in each week. To mortification they joined a spirit of fervent prayer. Besides reciting the office in choir, they assembled three times in each day for half an hour's prayer, which was followed by another half hour for reading the lives of the Saints. A quarter of an hour was appointed for a visit to Jesus in the holy sacrament, and Our Lady, but they remained during the greater part of both day and night in prayer

before the blessed Eucharist. They assisted at mass with the most edifying recollection and devotion. Their only relaxation was for an hour after dinner, which they spent in spiritual conversations, or in speaking of the actions of the saints. But while Alphonsus was the spirit and mover of all these pious exercises, he exceeded all his brethren in his mortifications, his fervour, and his exact practice of recollection and silence; and in order to conceal the severity with which he disciplined his body, he frequently retired to a cell or cave, in which, it was commonly reported, Our Lady several times appeared to him. Meanwhile, they did not forget the chief object of their institute; but by their preaching and apostolic labours, in Scala and the neighbouring places, the whole of the diocese assumed a new appearance, and many extraordinary conversions were effected.

As the number of his colleagues had considerably augmented, Alphonsus resolved to give stability and regularity to his congregation, by forming a set of rules for their direction. But here an unexpected difficulty arose, in the different views that were taken by his companions of several important points in their new rule; for some were of opinion, that, besides the missions, they ought to open schools for the instruction of the poor in learning; others were opposed to the strict poverty which they had hitherto observed; whilst

some, on the other hand, advised that a more complete renunciation of all worldly property should be made by all who entered the order. Alphonsus endeavoured to convince them that true poverty was an essential point of their rule, and that, the opening of schools for the poor, however charitable in itself, would serve only to distract them from the sole object of their foundation, the spiritual instruction of the poor. His reasons were unavailing ; and he was abandoned by all his companions, except two, one of whom was not in holy orders, and the other was the lay-brother already mentioned. His enemies hereupon began to triumph, and represent his undertaking as presumptuous and rash ; but he persevered in spite of their taunts and reproaches, trusting that God would soon supply him with companions, whilst he blessed His merciful hand that had sent him this humiliation. Fresh companions flocked to him from every quarter ; so that in 1735, within three years from the date of its foundation, he had been enabled to open three houses, including the first one at Scala.

Finding all things placed upon a sure footing, he resolved to implore the light of God to assist him in framing the rules to be observed, and the vows to be made, by the members of his order. He put up fervent prayers to the Holy Spirit, accompanying them with austere fasting and



rigorous mortification, and took the advice of the most learned and pious persons. Under their direction, aided by the grace of God, he composed the rules and constitutions of the order, to which he gave the name of Our blessed Saviour. He then made a moving discourse to his companions, in which he besought them, as followers of Jesus Christ, to imitate His perfect holocaust to His Eternal Father, and to offer themselves in sacrifice to Him for the salvation of souls, by promising an exact observance of the rules proposed. Many prayers, and the devout exercise of a holy retreat, were prescribed, to beg the Divine assistance; and, at last, upon the 21st of July, in the year 1742, in a poor chapel near Ciorani, in the diocese of Salerno, after singing the vespers of St. Mary Magdalen, the protectress of the congregation, they made their profession, which, in addition to the three usual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, included two others; the first never to accept any dignity, office, or benefice, out of the congregation, unless when expressly commanded by the Pope or the Superior-general; secondly, to remain in the order until death, and not to ask for a dispensation from it, save from the Pope or Superior-general. The brethren then proceeded to choose a superior of the whole order, and Alphonsus was unanimously elected, with the title of Superior Rector.

The fame of the wonderful virtue and holiness of Alphonsus daily spread more and more over that and the neighbouring states, and many houses of the order were founded in different cities of the kingdom. He resolved, therefore, to obtain the confirmation of his institute by the Holy See; and for this purpose, deputed one of his companions to lay the constitutions which he had framed before the immortal Pontiff, Benedict XIV, who at that time filled the chair of St. Peter. After a mature examination, he issued his brief, approving of them, upon the 25th of February, 1749. He confirmed Alphonsus as superior, and granted many favours and privileges to the order, but required that its name should be changed from that of Our blessed Saviour to that of Our blessed Redeemer, to distinguish it from the congregation of regular canons of Our blessed Saviour. From that time, the order rapidly increased, and houses were founded in the states of the Church, as well as in the kingdom of Naples. Alphonsus had to contend with much opposition in his attempts to establish it in various places, and he was accustomed to say that God wrought a continual miracle in his behalf, by providing means both for the foundation of new houses and the support of those already opened; for although he was often without money for these purposes, he placed all his trust in God, and was never disappointed.

He surpassed all his companions in the exactness with which he observed all the rules and obligations of the order; but seeing the severity with which he disciplined himself, and the austerity of his fasts and mortifications, it was a source of wonder how he could live. He was content with a small quantity of soup and bread, with some fruit, although he never touched the latter upon Saturday, and the vigils of Our Lady. He wore continually rough hair-shirts, with small iron chains and a girdle of camel's hair. Besides the time allotted for prayer by the rule, he rose early in the morning to meditate upon the truths and mysteries of religion, and kept his mind so closely united to God, that his prayer was uninterrupted and unceasing. He consecrated all his actions to the glory of God, to whom he often turned by fervent ejaculations and aspirations of love; and in celebrating mass, and reciting the office of the Church, his whole demeanour breathed devotion and edification. He regulated the affairs of the order, and provided for all its wants, with the most unwearying diligence and zeal. He laboured to inspire his brethren with the love of humiliations, of contempt, and of suffering, in imitation of Our blessed Redeemer, whose name they bore, and strongly represented to them, both by word and by letter, the necessity of living up to the vows they had made, and the spirit of the institute

which they professed. The superiors bound themselves by oath not to allow the members to possess anything of their own, or to permit anything that might trench, however slightly, upon their vow of poverty. He laid aside the composition of his works, and every other occupation, to attend to the concerns of his brethren. "When it happens," he wrote to them, "that any one comes to speak to me, or writes to me respecting his affairs, or those of the order, I leave everything . . . . . I wish it to be well understood, that he who treats me with this sort of confidence, attaches me more closely to him; and let every one be assured, that I abandon everything, when I have to comfort one of my brethren and children. I am more anxious to assist one of them, than to do any other thing. This good is required of me before any other, by the Almighty, whilst I hold this office." When any of them fell sick, his affection and solicitude for their consolation was redoubled; he went to visit them, and took care that their food was well prepared and properly seasoned. He refused to send a consumptive patient back to his family, saying that the sick brethren were useful to the congregation by their prayers, and by affording them the means of practising the works of mercy. "We are their father," he said, speaking of the sick, "and the order is their mother. Since they have left father

and mother to offer themselves to God, we must perform all the duties of charity in their regard."

As the work of preaching, instructing and hearing the confessions of the poor, was the chief end of the congregation, he was careful to prepare his novices, by long practice and training, for the apostolic ministry. He was averse to unpremeditated discourses, and to rhetorical flourish and rounded periods, and the flash and pomp of words. "If the poorest people do not understand me," he used to say, "what is the use of calling them to the church? The will is not moved, and our preaching unprofitable. Of everything else I shall have to render an account, but not of my sermons. I have always preached so as to make myself understood by the most ignorant old woman. "But it must not be supposed that he was opposed to the study and use of oratory in preaching. "The less one knows of rhetoric," he very justly observed, "the less one knows how to adapt himself to the simple apostolic style. The Greek and Latin fathers were masters in this art, and therefore knew how to adapt themselves to all, and, when occasion required, to employ it to advantage. If art is wanting, the sermon will be insipid and irregular, and instead of reaching either the understanding or the feelings of the audience, will make them loathe and disregard the preacher." To encourage the study of oratory, he published

two letters upon popular eloquence, which he sent to many bishops, preachers, and heads of religious orders. With equal earnestness, he urged his brethren to the study of moral theology; "If you do not know that," he said to them, "you ruin yourselves, and send your penitents to hell. This study only ends with life itself." He condemned too great laxity and excessive severity, as alike destructive to souls. If he heard that any of his priests had fallen into either extreme, he could find neither rest nor comfort. He inculcated the necessity of great caution and prudence with habitual or relapsing sinners. "Take heed," he said, "how you absolve such persons. Their tears, if they shed any, are deceitful. They weep not through hatred of sin, but to force you to give them absolution, in order that they may begin anew." He recommended that they should not be dismissed at once from the confessional, but that tenderness and sympathy should be shown them, and that they should be made to understand their unhappy state, and know that amendment is not impossible, if they would have recourse to the grace of God and the patronage of the blessed Virgin.

But as the leading object of his order was to instruct the poorest people in the country parishes and spread over the least-frequented districts, he made it the constant occupation of thirty years to visit

every province, town and village of the kingdom, catechising the children, hearing confessions, and preaching to the people. When he came within sight of the place, where the mission was to be given, he recited the litany of the blessed Virgin, and other prayers, to implore the Divine blessing. He proceeded next to the principal church, and after adoring the blessed sacrament, mounted the pulpit, and earnestly invited the people to profit by the grace of God, in the spiritual exercises of the following days.

Every morning and evening, the missionaries preached to the adults and catechised the children. For the first three evenings, they went round the most populous streets with a crucifix, calling upon the inhabitants to remember the last things, and to come to hear the word of God. Alphonsus, who delivered the principal sermon in the evening, was accustomed to discipline himself with a thick rope, three times during the mission; once during the sermon upon sin; a second time, during that upon hell; and a third, during that upon scandal; and when the women had left the church, after the evening sermon, and the men alone remained, a sermon upon compunction was addressed to them, to excite them to discipline themselves. After these sermons, three or four days more were spent in the way of devotion, as Alphonsus called it, wherein the preachers dwelt upon the necessity of prayer,

and upon the passion of our Lord, which he described in such affecting terms, that all were moved to tears of love and tenderness. There were other sermons for the instruction of children, boys, and unmarried women and widows, and for married women, adapted to their respective wants and state of life. The retreat closed with a general communion, and, after a sermon upon perseverance, the solemn benediction was given to all. Upon the last day of the way of devotion, in order to leave a perpetual memorial of the passion, Alphonsus erected a Calvary, as he styled it, near the village or city. Accompanied by four companies, each like him bearing a heavy cross upon his shoulders, he proceeded to the spot, where they were to be raised, and after planting them in the ground, proposed a devout meditation upon the mysteries of the passion, by which his whole audience was deeply affected. During the mission, he compelled his priests to attend in the confessional every morning for seven hours, including the time of mass, and would not allow them to leave it without permission from the superior. They were forbidden to receive any present or remuneration whatever, and their table was restricted to the most frugal fare, which was supplied by the charity of the bishop or one of the inhabitants. His appearance in the pulpit was enough to excite feelings of piety, and many conversions were wrought by seeing his atti-



tude and gestures from a distance. In the confessional he received poor and rich with the same affectionate compassion, and knew how to suggest such powerful motives to them, that they never hesitated freely to confess all their sins, not being prevented by false shame from undergoing a momentary confusion for the sake of everlasting forgiveness and peace. To secure the advantages of the missions, he prolonged them to fifteen, or even thirty days, until he had produced a complete reform among the people, and during his stay, he took care to form pious confraternities among members of the different ranks of society, so that by mutual good example and practices of devotion, the effect of the mission might be sure and lasting. God rewarded his zeal by several prodigies; for one day, during a mission at Amalfi, a person going to confession at the house where Alphonsus lived, found him there at the very time for beginning the sermon in the church. After he had finished his confession, he went straight to the church, and to his surprise found Alphonsus some way advanced in his sermon. He was astonished at this circumstance, for, at his departure, he had left Alphonsus hearing the confessions of other persons at his house, and had not seen him come out of the only door, through which he could possibly pass on his way to the church. It was therefore reported in the city that Alphonsus heard confessions at home

at the same time that he was preaching in the church. Whilst he was preaching on the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, and exciting his hearers to recur with confidence to her, in all their wants, he suddenly exclaimed, "O, you are too cold in praying to our Blessed Lady ! I will pray to her for you." He knelt down in the attitude of prayer, with his eyes raised to heaven, and was seen by all present lifted more than a foot from the ground, and turned towards a statue of the Blessed Virgin, near the pulpit. The countenance of Our Lady darted forth beams of light, which shone upon the face of the extatic Alphonsus. This spectacle lasted about five or six minutes, during which the people cried out, "*Mercy, mercy ! a miracle, a miracle !*" and every one burst into a flood of tears. But the saint rising up, exclaimed in a loud voice, "Be glad, for the Blessed Virgin has granted your prayer." Before the missionaries left the city, Alphonsus foretold that an earthquake would take place on the following day, and the event proved the truth of his words.

These apostolical labours and wonderful actions spread the fame of the sanctity and learning of the saint throughout the whole kingdom ; and the king and principal clergy resolved to procure his nomination to the episcopal dignity. He was first named to the archbishopric of Palermo, but, by his fervent prayers and mortifications, succeeded in obtaining

of God that that dignity might not be forced upon him. But not long afterwards the bishopric of St. Agatha de' Goti becoming vacant, pope Clement XIII appointed him, from his own knowledge of his merits, and without any recommendation from other quarters, to fill it. Alphonsus wrote earnest letters to several of his friends and to the pope himself, in which he represented his incapacity, advanced age, weak state of health, and his vow of not accepting any benefice, and prayed to be relieved from such a burthen. On the evening he received his letter, the pope was inclined to comfort him by acceding to his petition ; but on the following morning, he ordered his secretary, cardinal Negroni to inform Alphonsus that it was his positive command that he should accept the bishopric. The cardinal asked, if his holiness had not told him last evening that he was inclined to comfort him? "That is true," replied the pope, "but the Holy Ghost has since inspired me to do the contrary." As soon as cardinal Spinelli, to whom the saint had written upon the subject, was told what the pope had said, he immediately exclaimed, "It is the will of God ; the voice of the pope is the voice of God." When Alphonsus received the letter of cardinal Negroni, he bowed his head, and said, "*Obmutui quoniam tu fecisti, gloria Patri,*" and then placing the letter upon his head, he repeated several times, "God wills that I should be bishop,

and bishop I will be. The pope has commanded it, and I must obey." The dread of the heavy responsibility and cares of his new dignity threw him into such a violent fever, that his life was despaired of. The pope was much afflicted, when he heard of his danger, but did not change his mind. "If he dies," said he, "we send him our apostolic blessing; if he recovers, we wish to see him in Rome." Alphonsus recovered, and instantly set off for Rome. His brethren, afflicted at the loss of such a father, applied to the pope, through the congregation of cardinals for the affairs of bishops and religious orders, and obtained his confirmation in his office of superior of the order, upon the 25th of May in that year 1762.

Upon his arrival in Rome, finding that the pope was gone into the country, the saint resolved to visit the holy house of our Blessed Lady at Loretto. He celebrated mass every morning in that venerable sanctuary, and spent many hours in contemplating the goodness and love of the eternal Son of God, who, for our sake, deigned to dwell within that poor and humble cottage. His countenance beamed with love, as he kissed every thing that had belonged to the holy family; and it was a source of edification and devotion to his companions to witness his fervour, and the veneration with which he honoured that sanctuary, consecrated by the presence of God made man.

He returned to Rome, and was received by the pope and cardinals with every mark of esteem and veneration. He was consecrated bishop, in the church of Sta. Maria *sopra Minerva*, upon the 20th of June, 1762, being in his sixty-sixth year. He made preparations for his departure, and immediately left Rome, to proceed to his diocese. He delayed a few days at Naples to settle the affairs of his order, and set out on his way to St. Agatha, although his friends represented to him that it was extremely dangerous to go there at that time of the year. He was received with great rejoicings by the people, who had already conceived an exalted opinion and esteem for him, from the reputation of virtue and sanctity, which had preceded him.

He had declared his opinion and rules for the guidance of bishops in the discharge of their duties, in a small work which he had published upon the subject; and to the model which he therein laid down the rest of his life was exactly conformable. He practised the same rigid poverty in his dress, the furniture of his palace, and his manner of life, which had distinguished him in the congregation. The sacred vessels, which he used as bishop, were of the poorest description; little silver was seen among them, and that little, together with a carriage and two mules, given to him by his brother, were afterwards sold for the benefit of the poor.

He slept, as before, upon a straw bed, and his rooms were so completely unfurnished, that, when a stranger chanced to visit him, he was obliged to borrow beds, linen and plate, for his use, and on many occasions his charity left him without the means of meeting even inferior expenses. His food was of the most inferior kind, and even this he sprinkled with wormwood and other bitter herbs, so that the poor, who flocked to him, refused to eat of what he had left of it. His attendants were few in number, and he treated them on every occasion with the greatest kindness and sweetness. His mortifications seemed to increase both in severity and frequency, and one day his secretary had to burst open his door, and snatch the discipline out of his hands, fearing lest the violence wherewith he scourged himself might cause his death. He passed a great part of the night in prayer, after he had been engaged during the whole of the day in the affairs of his diocese. One of the canons of his cathedral begged him to repose for a short time, until his head-ache should have gone off; but he replied that if he waited for that, he should never be able to begin, for his head-ache never left him.

In the discharge of his pastoral duties he was a perfect imitator of the vigilant and indefatigable St. Charles Borromeo. During the thirteen years that he was bishop, he never left his diocese, even for the three months allowed by the Council of

Trent, except for a short period on three occasions of great urgency,—twice upon the business of his order, and once, by the express command of his directors, for the sake of his health. He laboured to reform morals, and excite a spirit of piety throughout his diocese by his private discourses, no less than by his sermons and missions. Each year he visited one half of his diocese; and before beginning the visitation, performed a novena with his people, to draw down the Divine blessing on his labours. During the visitation he refused to receive any present, however trifling in value, saying that it was contrary to the canons. He heard the confessions of all who chose to come to him, and gave instructions to the people. If any one was sick who had not received the holy sacrament of confirmation, he hastened to administer it to him at home, in spite of the weather, bad roads, or other difficulties that lay in his way; and he visited all the sick at their own houses, whenever his own health allowed him. He never undertook anything connected with his diocese without having previously implored the light of God by earnest prayer; and in cases of greater moment, he distrusted his own judgment, and sought the counsel of other bishops, upon whom he placed reliance. But, most of all, he was anxious to promote in his clergy a spirit of piety, learning, purity of life and zeal for the sake of religion. For this end he

revived the regulations of the canons, of the synods, or of his predecessors, regarding the habits and conduct of ecclesiastics. He laboured to make them the model of their flocks, and deputed priests of irreproachable life to report to him any defects in their observance of their duty, that they might be instantly corrected. He carefully examined all candidates for holy orders and benefices; and, besides a rigid examination of all who applied for leave to hear confessions, he instructed them for several days in the practical part of that important duty; and after he had granted these faculties, the candidate was obliged to return, after a time, to undergo a second examination, to obtain the confirmation of them. He established weekly conferences on cases of moral theology in every part of his diocese, and commanded all to attend them, under severe penalties. He regularly attended them himself; and when his health confined him to his bed, he ordered the conference to be held in his room. For the use of his clergy, in their sermons and explanations of the gospel of each Sunday, he composed his *Dominicale*, or compendium of discourses for Sundays; and his *Selva*, or materials for sermons and instructions for priests during their spiritual retreats, and for their private reading, accompanied with practical instructions upon the exercises of the missions.

With the same diligence he watched over the



students destined for the ecclesiastical state, and visited his seminary twice every week, when he endeavoured to encourage in their tender minds a love of piety and a desire of consecrating themselves wholly to God. He composed pious airs to be sung by them during the time allowed for recreation. He refused to allow them to leave the seminary during the vacation, lest they might lose their habits of diligence and regularity, and acquire the spirit of the world.

It may be easily conceived with what zeal he laboured to extirpate scandals from his diocese, and to propagate morality and piety among his people. He expelled a company of players from it, lest their acting should corrupt his flock; and with the same firmness he proceeded against all, without regard to their rank or influence at court, who led scandalous lives. He converted many public sinners, by his sweet and persuasive eloquence, and supplied them with a retreat or the means of subsistence, that poverty might not induce them to return to their evil ways; but he drove out of his diocese those whom he found incorrigible. Having heard that one of these women had taken advantage of his absence to return to it, he was grievously afflicted; and when asked the cause of his sorrow, he replied, "because I am a bishop;" and immediately, without regarding the danger to which his return exposed him, for he

had left his diocese for the sake of his health, he returned to Arienzo; and summoned the woman to his presence, and spoke to her with such force and energy, that she fell at his feet; and from that moment abandoned her wicked habits, and, retiring to a house of refuge, became a model of a sincere conversion and exemplary life.

The zeal and charity of the holy bishop was constantly directed to the religious instruction and spiritual advancement of his flock. He built and repaired churches, and formed new parishes, and supplied funds for the maintenance of the priests whom he appointed to the care of them. He introduced the laudable practice of proposing a meditation upon the passion of Our Lord, or other suitable subjects, at the first mass every morning; and ordained that the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, with the recital of devout prayers in honour of Our Lord present in it, should take place every evening; and on Saturdays he never failed to proclaim the glories and the praises of Our Lady, that the hearts of all men might burn with love and devotion to her. He established confraternities amongst his flock, as a means of inducing them to frequent the sacraments, and to hear the word of God; and maintained the spirit of their foundation by frequently preaching to them; and one evening, whilst he was preaching, during a retreat, to the confraternity of gentlemen

at Arienzo, upon the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, he was on a sudden rapt in extacy, and his countenance shone with such splendour, that the whole church was lighted up with unusual brightness; and he exclaimed, "See the Blessed Virgin is come to dispense graces amongst us; let us pray to her, and we shall obtain whatever we ask."

When Alphonsus took possession of his see, he resolved to administer the temporalities of it in such a manner, that, with the exception of the small sum required for his own subsistence and other necessary expenses, all of it should go to the poor. For this purpose, he reserved to himself only the allowance which his father had left him, and gave all the rest to the poor, that crowded every evening to his palace. He never allowed any one to leave his door discontented; and when he went out, he was surrounded by troops of beggars, to all of whom, either with his own hands, or by means of others, he gave some relief. Moreover, he ordered his steward to distribute bread and money every Saturday, at his palace-gate, to all that chose to apply. But not satisfied with these public charities, he obliged his priests to furnish him with exact lists of all persons, in reduced circumstances, who were ashamed to beg. He allowed them a monthly stipend, or sent them supplies of money, linen, or other necessities. He sought out priests, unable to say mass, or in ex-

treme poverty ; the sick or aged poor unable to work, widows with large families, or orphans bereft of their parents, that he might relieve them ; in a word, the necessitous of every class were supported by him. He was particularly careful of poor virgins, and provided them with the necessaries of life ; and, if they married, with money for their dowry, or the furniture of their house. He sent money to poor prisoners in jail, succoured their families, or freed them from confinement, by arranging with their creditors. It was found, upon calculation, that the sums, which he spent in charity, considerably exceeded all the expenses of his house and those belonging to his rank, as well as the salaries of all his officers. He remitted the fees of his episcopal court, to all who asked it, and maintained a priest to defend poor priests, and other persons, in the common courts of law. These charities reduced him to such poverty, that he was often forced to borrow the means of paying for his meals ; and, on one occasion, when a person applied to him for seven ducats, to satisfy a creditor, who threatened to send him to prison, he did not possess even so small a sum, and became security for the payment of it by monthly instalments. And about twice that sum remaining unpaid, when he resigned his bishopric, he paid it all, before leaving the diocese.

But this was nothing in comparison with his

charities during the great scarcity that afflicted the whole of Italy in 1764. He sold the mules and carriage, which had been given to him by his brother, as has been already mentioned; and together with his pastoral ring and golden cross. He restricted his own table to a small quantity of bread and soup, with the occasional addition of some fruit; and advised his family to do the same, for the sake of the poor. Having nothing else to dispose of, he wanted to sell his rochet and time-piece; but his servants told him that the latter was necessary for the regulation of his time. He obtained supplies of grain from his brother; and of beans from one of his clergy, and distributed them without loss of time amongst the poor. He earnestly recommended charity to the civil authorities and to the ecclesiastics and religious communities, and severely reproved the superior of a convent, who had been parsimonious in his alms. One day, he found his room full of poor people, begging for relief. "My children," he said, with tears in his eyes, "I have nothing more to give you. I have sold my carriage, mules, and every thing I had. I have no more money, and can find no one to lend me any." At these words, they began to shed tears; and, after mixing his tears with theirs, he retired into another room, and left his assistants to distribute alms amongst them.

During the whole time that he was bishop of

St. Agatha, he suffered much in his bodily health, and on three several occasions, his complaint reduced him to the lowest stage of weakness, but he persevered in performing all the duties of his office, and providing for all the wants of his diocese. The unwearying zeal with which he laboured to promote the welfare of his flock, induced him to preach every day during a novena, celebrated during the month of August, to obtain a supply of rain in a season of drought. This excitement, after a long illness, the heat of the season, and his natural weakness, brought on a general rheumatism, which paralysed the motion of all his members, and curved his head in such a way that he could neither say mass, nor even lie down with comfort. It was discovered after his death that the six *vertebræ* of the neck, with the cartilage upon them, had become one solid bone. But after several months of severe pain and suffering, the fever, which had accompanied the rheumatism, left him, and a sore healed, which had been produced by the curvature of the head, and had been considered as likely to turn to a gangrene, which would have shortly caused death: but his head hung upon his breast in such a way, for the remaining seventeen years of his life, that he could not drink more than a few drops at a time; and was, consequently, unable to say mass. He still continued to preach, and attend at the examination

of candidates for orders or faculties for hearing confessions, and at the conferences of his clergy. After some time, however, he followed the advice of certain learned theologians, who told him that he might lawfully say mass, and receive the chalice, sitting down, and assisted by a priest in a stole and surplice; but he refused to adopt the counsel of others, who wished him to apply to the pope for leave to receive through a tube, saying that he had rather not say mass at all, than ask for a distinction which was reserved to the sovereign pontiff.

He had long been desirous of renouncing the episcopal office, which obedience alone had forced him to accept. He consulted with several persons of learning and prudence, and, with their concurrence, wrote to Pope Clement XIII, representing to him the reasons which had led him to make the request; but the pope replied that his very name was sufficient for the management of his diocese. He made a similar application to the succeeding pope, Clement XIV, who returned for answer, that one prayer made by him from his bed, for the good of his diocese, was worth more in the sight of God than a thousand visitations, and a thousand scourgings with the discipline even to blood. He continued, therefore, to administer his diocese, waiting, as he said, for the next pope to relieve him of it. On the 21st of September, 1774, he fell into a placid sleep, and remained in

it till the following day, when he suddenly rang his bell. His attendants ran in alarm, asking him what was the matter, for he had been two days without eating or speaking. "True enough," he replied, "but do you not know that I have been to assist the pope, who is just dead?" In a few days, it was found that Clement XIV had died precisely at the very hour of the day when Alphonsus had summoned his attendants to tell them he was dead. He sent an humble letter to Pius VI, as soon as he heard of his election; and, after some delay, received a favourable answer; in which the pope regretted the circumstances that obliged the saint to resign, adding that he accepted his resignation, on account of the strong and just reasons which he had advanced. As soon as the saint received the pope's letter, he exclaimed, "God be praised, for He has taken a mountain off my shoulders." In his petition he had not asked for any pension, but the pope assigned him an annual pension of 800 ducats, upon the revenues of his bishopric. He set the affairs of his diocese in order; and about the end of July, 1775, retired, amid the lamentations of his flock, to the house of his order, at San Michele de' Pagani, saying, as he mounted the stairs, "*Gloria Patri*. This cross, that I carry upon my breast, which was so heavy, when I mounted the stairs of the episcopal palace, has now become light, very light."



The fathers of the house had furnished a room for him, but he begged to be allowed to live like the rest of the brethren, and in all things, as far as his health would permit, he conformed to the rule of the order, as if he had been only a religious. He observed the same rigid poverty, that he might have the means of relieving the poor, towards whom he ever displayed the same tenderness and compassion, that had made him the father of the poor in his diocese. In spite of his infirmities, he preached every Saturday and Sunday in the church of San Michele, as well as in other neighbouring places, to the edification of all who heard him; and, in the same spirit of zeal for the salvation of his neighbours, he continued to compose and publish spiritual works for their instruction. One of these, entitled "the wonderful conduct of divine Providence in saving souls, by means of Jesus Christ," he dedicated to Pope Pius VI, who wrote him a letter, in which he thanked him, as he said, more than if he had offered him those gifts to which the world attaches most value. He encouraged the missionaries of his congregation in their labours, and joined in them by his prayers; and was never more delighted than when he was informed that the mission had been successful.

From the 9th of November, 1779, he was unable to say mass, and was therefore content with receiving the holy communion every morning, until

his death. He continued to observe in every other respect the same rigid mortification both as to the quantity and quality of his food, sending away from his table everything that was not like the food of the poor, as he termed it, that is, that was not of the most insipid kind. His confessor, whom he obeyed in all things, forbade him to practise his usual disciplines and other mortifications of the flesh, and he therefore secretly gave the box, that contained his instruments of penance, to his servant to destroy it. It pleased God to subject his virtue to the severest trials. He was assailed with such temptations against faith, that he was heard over the whole house, crying out, stamping upon the ground, and calling upon Jesus and Mary to succour him, for that he was a true son of the Catholic Church. These doubts troubled him even during his sleep. Not less painful were the torments, that he underwent from doubts and scruples of conscience, so that he often sent at a late hour of night for one of his directors; or after having his doubts written on a piece of paper by the lay-brother that attended him, he sent it to his director. But the moment that he received their command to allow his mind to rest in peace, he was perfectly calm and undisturbed, because he had already laid down in his book, entitled, "*The quiet of scrupulous souls*," that, in such cases, the only rule was perfect obedience to a prudent and

learned confessor, as he himself both in precept and practice ever taught. He subjected himself in everything, even in points of slight moment, to his confessor and the superiors of the house in which he lived, so that his whole life was a model of obedience.

During the latter years of his life, he was afflicted with deafness, and an almost total loss of sight, as also with hernia, which caused continual torments and the most acute pain. He could not lie down; but it was necessary to support him with pillows, that he might enjoy a little repose. When his maladies increased, he answered to those that inquired about his health, "I have death close upon me, but I have no desire save God alone, God alone, God alone." In bodily torments, as in mental anguish, he was the perfect copy of the model which he had already traced for the instruction of others. In his "*Conformity to the will of God*," he had represented that patience wherewith he endured his own afflictions, as the highest virtue.

In like manner did he strive to excite in his soul the most lively faith in the doctrines and mysteries of our holy Church, even as he had encouraged others to do in his works. Such were his "*Truths of Faith, and the Triumph of the Church, or the History of Heresies*," written against the false political and religious principles

of the Deists and Materialists of the last century; his "*Dogmatical Essay against the pretended Reformers*;" a defence of the doctrinal decrees of the holy Council of Trent; and his "*Victories of the Martyrs*," whose example he holds up to encourage the faithful to stand firm and be ready to die for the faith. With equal energy did he, by his writings and sermons, and still more by his example, labour to enkindle in the hearts of all, a fervent faith and devotion towards Our Lord in the blessed sacrament. Sometimes, as if in his transports of love he beheld Jesus with the eyes of the body, he would exclaim, "Look at him, see how beautiful he is, love him!" To spread this love over the whole world, he published his "*Visits to the Blessed Sacrament for every day of the month*."\* One Good Friday, not being able, on account of his health, to receive this great pledge of divine love, he was afflicted to such a degree, that a violent fever came on, which, although blood was taken from him, did not cease, until he had received communion upon the following day. He displayed his tender affection towards the passion of Jesus in his sermons, and in his three works entitled, "*Reflections upon the Passion*," "*The Love of Souls*," and "*Darts of Fire*." And he recommended to his missionaries

\* Translated into English by the Rev. Joseph Curr. It has gone through several editions.

the practice of preaching to the people upon the passion of Jesus, as being a more efficacious means of producing lasting conversions of sinners, than the more terrible meditations on the judgments of God, "because," said he, "that which love cannot do, fear will not do, and when a soul is attached to Jesus crucified, it has no room for fear." To propagate the love of Jesus in his infancy, which was one of his favourite devotions, he composed his "*Novena for Christmas.*" He preached also with extraordinary fervour on the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the office of which he procured leave to introduce into his diocese. We have already spoken of his tender affection towards Our blessed Lady. One day, his director happening to express his confidence that she would appear to him, at least at the hour of his death, as she had often appeared to many of her servants; "Mark," said Alphonsus, "when I was young, I often conversed with Our Lady, and she directed me in all the affairs of the order." His director repeatedly asked him what she had said to him; but his only answer was, "She said so many sweet things, she said so many sweet things." He declared the Blessed Virgin the protectress of his order, and sought to encourage devotion to her, as a powerful means of obtaining divine grace. "The reformers," said he, "represent the devotion to Mary as injurious to God, denying her power, and

impugning her potent intercession; but it is our duty to show, for the profit of our hearers, how powerful she is with God, and how pleasing it is to Him to see her honoured." These feelings of devotion to her he has embodied in his "*Glories of Mary*," which has made known in England and other countries, the filial tenderness and love which he cherished towards our holy Mother. After her, he entertained a particular devotion to her pure spouse St. Joseph, and also to St. Teresa, whose names, with those of Jesus and Mary, he placed at the beginning of every thing he wrote. As a proof of his profound veneration for the Pope, the visible head of the Church, the representative of Christ on earth, we need only mention his "*Vindiciæ pro suprema Pontificis potestate adversus Justinum Febronium*," composed to refute the Jansenistical opinions advanced by that author. With the same view, he wrote three other treatises in Latin, the first proving and defending the infallibility of the pope in his decisions upon faith and morals; the second, establishing his supremacy over œcumenical as well as other councils; in the third, which is entitled, "*De justa prohibitione, et abolitione Librorum nocuæ Lectionis*," he maintains the right of the pope to forbid the reading of books dangerous to faith and morals, and refutes the opinion of those who deemed such reading lawful. "I am ready," he writes in one

of his letters, "to shed my blood in defence of the pope's supremacy; for, if that be taken away, the authority of the Church is at an end." "Without this supreme judge," he said on another occasion, "for the decision of controversies, faith is lost. This judge heretics do not possess, and this is what produces confusion and differences of opinion among them, for every one is his own judge."

With what firm hope did he not exclaim, "My Jesus thou hast died for me; thy blood is my hope and all my salvation." Upon this confidence in the mercies of God he rested, as upon an anchor of safety, in his interior troubles and temptations, no less than in all the difficulties with which he had to contend in tearing himself from the world, and in founding and establishing his order, in spite of poverty and the malice of his enemies. Of his tender love of God, we forbear to speak. In his "*Practice of the love of Jesus*," he has pourtrayed that divine love, which was the main-spring of his whole life; and of his charity towards his neighbour it will suffice to say, in addition to the proofs already given, that he assigned to each day of the week, some particular class of his fellow-men, for whom he obliged his order to offer up their prayers. The bell was ordered to be rung in all their houses, every evening, to call the inmates to recite the psalm *De profundis*, for the souls in purgatory, whom the saint, during the whole of his life, sought to relieve by prayers,

indulgences, and mortifications, and especially by offering up the holy sacrifice of the Mass for them. Another proof of his spirit of peace and charity towards men, is the fact, that although he was naturally of a hasty and choleric disposition, he repressed it in such a way that the bitterest reproaches and affronts never moved him to return a harsh reply. His humility was equal to his other virtues. When his friends spoke to him of the conversions he had wrought, and the good order he had established in his diocese, he interrupted them and attributed all to God. Thus also, one of his religious friends going into his room, saw him raised above the ground, with his arms stretched out towards the picture of Jesus and Mary; but, as soon as the saint perceived him, he was covered with confusion, and said to him, "What! are you here? I enjoin you not to mention this to any one." In like manner, he endeavoured to conceal a miracle which he had wrought, by giving speech to a boy, who had never before been able to utter a word. The saint made the sign of the cross upon his forehead, and gave him a picture of Our Lady to kiss, telling him at the same time to say whom the picture represented; and he immediately answered, "The blessed Virgin."

In the practice of these virtues and the working of these wonderful effects, the holy man reached

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the close of his earthly career. Upon the 13th of September, 1786, he said to a Carmelite father, who was accustomed to visit him every year during that month, "Father Joseph, next year you will find me dead, and we shall not see one another again in life; pray for me to God and Our blessed Lady of the Seven Dolours." On the 18th of July of the following year, he was attacked, in addition to his habitual complaints, with a violent dysentery, and an acute fever, so that he clearly saw that his end was near. It pleased God to free him from his usual scruples and anxieties of conscience, that he might pass out of the world in peace. He confessed frequently during his illness, and received the blessed Eucharist every morning. His religious attended him by turns, and suggested devout thoughts and acts of virtue to him. Upon the 23rd of that month it was judged necessary to administer the holy sacrament of extreme unction; and two days afterwards, he communicated in the form of Viaticum, with such fervour and longing desire of receiving Our dear Lord, that he repeated every moment, "Give me the body of Jesus Christ: when will Jesus come? give me Jesus Christ." And when the priest brought the holy sacrament to him, he exclaimed in the fulness of his joy, "Come, my Jesus." After which, he passed a long time in deep meditation and acts of thanksgiving. His religious begged him to give them his blessing and to pray to God for them; he raised his hand and

blessed them, saying, "May the blessing of Almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, descend upon you and remain always with you!" He then blessed all the houses and fathers of his congregations, the capital, and his former diocese; and added with much earnestness, "I bless the fathers of this kingdom, and of the pope's states, the king, and all the generals, ministers, and judges, who shall invoke the saints, and act justly."

Four days before his death, he was seized with such convulsions, and the gangrene, already mentioned, had increased to such a degree, that he lost the use of his speech; but he continued to accompany his religious in the prayers which they recited for him, and opened his mouth, with great joy and satisfaction, to receive the blessed sacrament. When the holy names of Jesus and Mary were uttered, he seemed to gain fresh strength; and when an image of Our Lady was brought to him, on the day before his death, he opened his eyes, and fixed them upon her, whom he had always revered and loved as his mother, and his countenance beamed with delight and tenderness. Soon afterwards, he fell into his agony, but he remained so calm and placid, that the fathers, who were round him, did not perceive that he was about to breathe his last. Whilst his religious were reciting devout prayers for him, and shedding abundant tears, he

pressed the crucifix and the picture of Our Lady closely to his breast, and so passed to the glory of Jesus and the peace of the saints, on Wednesday, the 1st of August, in the year 1787, at the age of ninety years, ten months and five days.

Upon the following day, his body was buried with extraordinary pomp and ceremony, in the church of St. Michele de' Pagani, amid the tears and lamentations of the city of Nocera de' Pagani, and of the whole kingdom of Naples. It pleased God to manifest the glory to which he had raised his servant, by a vision which He vouchsafed to a Teresian nun, in the diocese of Melfi. She was praying in the choir of her convent, when she heard a clear and distinct voice, which commanded her to tell her confessor, that she had seen the venerable Alphonsus Liguori, surrounded with splendour and glory. She replied, "I see no one!" but, immediately afterwards saw, as she herself twice attested upon oath, "the servant of God in a globe of light or splendour; to which," said she, "I can compare no light in this world; but, as near as I can describe it, it was like a bright sun reflected in the purest crystal; and the holy prelate was so joyful, and beautiful, that his flesh appeared like whitest ivory, and my soul swooned, as it were, through joy." The saint gave her many admonitions for her spiritual guidance, and concluded with

these words, "Daughter, keep thyself ever in purity of heart, and let thy heart ever be possessed by God alone, and ever resigned in Him, to suffer for His sake, as much as it shall please Him, and to be always upon the earth, as if it were not upon it."

The fame of the sanctity and miracles of the servant of God induced many devout and influential persons to petition the Congregation of Rites to enrol his name among the saints. In the processes made in consequence of this petition, many miracles are related; but as the number of them is too great for insertion in this place, we content ourselves with relating those only, which have been approved by the holy Congregation of Rites. Magdalen de Nunzio of Raino, near Benevento, suffered in 1790 from an abscess in the left breast. A surgeon made an incision to let off the ulcerous matter, lest a gangrene should ensue. A considerable quantity of it ran off, but the gangrene, which had been already formed, continued to eat away the flesh around the seat of the disorder, so that the wound became still deeper, and it became necessary to cut away the greater part of the breast. But as she grew rapidly worse, the surgeon ordered the rites of the Church to be administered. In the evening of that day, one of her neighbours coming to see her, brought with her a picture of the saint, with a small piece of his garment. By her advice, the sick woman

recommended herself to Alphonsus, and placed the picture upon the wound, and swallowed a few threads of the relic in some water. She then fell into a quiet sleep, and when she arose in the morning, discovered to her great surprise, that she was perfectly cured, and the whole of her breast restored, even that part which had been cut off, nor did she ever afterwards suffer any pain or inconvenience from it. Father Francis of Ottajano, of the reformed Franciscan order, was attacked by violent rheumatic pains, accompanied with fever and spitting of blood ; which daily increased, until the physicians pronounced that he had reached an advanced stage of consumption, and had not long to live. In this reduced state of body, and in daily expectation of death, he fervently recommended himself to the patronage of the saint, who had died a few days before, and placed a relic of him upon his breast, saying, " If thou art really in heaven, deliver me from this death, so disgusting and so much detested by all." As soon as he had spoken these words, he fell into a calm sleep, and awoke perfectly cured, to the admiration of his friends, who had supposed that he was already dead.

The Congregation of Rites allowed the cause of his beatification to be brought forward in 1796, and on the 14th of May, 1802, decided that it might be safely proceeded with, the cardinal reporter

having declared that the theologians, who had examined his manuscript and printed works, had found nothing censurable in them. The invasion of the French into Italy interrupted the further progress of the cause, but upon the 15th of September, 1816, Pius VII solemnly published the brief for his beatification.\*

\* The following are the chief works of St. Alphonsus :—

1. *Dissertation upon the moderate use of the probable opinion* (in Italian), Naples, 1754. 2. *Moral Theology* (in Latin), Naples, 1755, 2 vols. 4to., dedicated to Benedict XIV, who wrote the Saint a complimentary letter in reply. In this work, he explains his system of probabilism, on which he has written much in his various writings. It was attacked by Father Patuzzi, a Dominican, who published, in 1764, under the name of Adelphus Dositheus, a work entitled *La causa del probabilismo riprodotta da Monsig. Liguori e convinta*; and the Saint replied by his *Apologia della Dissertazione*, which he afterwards fused in his larger work on Moral Theology. 3. *Guide of Candidates for Orders* (in Latin), 1758. 4. *Instructions for the People upon the Decalogue, in the form of a Catechism* (in Latin) 1768. 5. *Dogmatical works against the pretended Reformers* (in Italian), Venice, 1770. 6. *History of all Heresies, with the refutation of them*, Venice, 1773, 3 vols. 8vo. 7. *Victories of the Martyrs*, Venice, 1777, 2 vols. 12mo. 8. *Sermons and Instructions*, Venice, 1779, 2 vols. 8vo. 9. *Instructions and Practice for Confessors* (in Italian), Bassano, 1780, 3 vols. 12mo. It is an antidote to the *Istruzione dei Confessori e dei Penitenti*, printed at Venice in 1753. The Saint republished his work in Latin, under the title of *Praxis Confessarii*, Venice, 1781. 10. *The true Spouse of Jesus Christ, or the Holy Religious* (in Italian), Venice, 1781, 2 vols. 12mo. 11. *Moral Discourses for all the Sundays of the Year*, Venice, 1781, 4to. 12. *Truths of Faith, against the Deists, Materialists, and Secta-*

ries, Venice, 1781, 2 vols. 8vo. These three last works are in Italian. 13. *Homo apostolicus instructus ad audiendas Confessiones*, Venice, 1782, 3 vols. 4to. 14. *Glories of Mary*, Venice, 1784, 2 vols. 8vo., with a Defence, published at Naples, to refute a letter under the signature of *Lamindo Pritaneo resuscitato*, a name which the celebrated Muratori had formerly assumed in a controversy with Leclerc. 15. *Spiritual works*, Venice, 1788, 2 vols. 12mo.

## ST. FRANCIS DI GIROLAMO, S. J.

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1642—1716.

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THE lives of extraordinary men have ever attracted the attention of mankind. For they unfold the springs of action and the principles of conduct, together with the measure of our moral energies. They are the text-book of all who study excellence; charts which lay down the tracks of virtue, and point out the shoals and quicksands of vice; records which enable us safely to profit by the good or evil example, the prosperous or ill success of previous adventurers in the voyage of life. And assuredly this benefit results from none so evidently as from the histories of those illustrious heroes—the Saints of Christianity. That moral instruction which, in the lives of warriors, statesmen, and philosophers, is oftentimes obscured or tainted, is, in the biography of holy men, delivered to us clear and undefiled. Like mirrors, their lives reflect the bright assemblage of qualities that should adorn the



Christian character, and are the stars of various magnitude and brilliancy that stud the milky way which leads to bliss everlasting. And as among that multitudinous host, whose rays are blended and commingled, so as to diffuse a veil of radiance over them all, some orb of more conspicuous size and glorious aspect will arrest the eye; so those heroic men, who have instructed others unto justice, gleam forth from the pages of sacred biography.

The martyr sheds his blood but once, and is exalted for ever; then what reward will be prepared for the missionary, who, while he burns to die for the faith, is yet content to live for the greater honour and glory of God, and the profit of his neighbour? He, therefore, who would imbibe the spirit of zeal, and learn the arts of wisdom necessary in directing souls, should study and contemplate the career of that extraordinary man whose virtues and achievements are the subject of the sketch we here present.

In that part of the kingdom of Naples which is commonly called Terra d'Otranto, a small village near Taranto gave birth to St. Francis di Girolamo. This event, which was destined to exercise so important an influence over the world in these latter times, took place upon the 17th of December, 1642. His parents, John Leonard di Girolamo and Gentilesca Gravina, were distinguished less

by the honourable station which they occupied in society than by their virtues and the excellent education they gave to their children,—eleven in number, of whom Francis was the eldest.

But not only was virtue thus the inheritance of our saint, and as it were the natural growth of his soul, but sprung up therein with an energy that early developed the rich qualities of the soil it occupied. A judgment beyond his years, a sweet submission and obedience to his parents, a virginal modesty, and an ardent love of prayer and retirement, marked the childhood of the Saint, and betokened his future greatness and sanctity. But especially he was remarkable for his charity to the poor, and might truly say with Job, “from my infancy compassion grew with me.” He had not the heart to dismiss a beggar without relieving him; but lavished with a holy prodigality, upon all who solicited his charity, money, provisions, or whatever else he had at hand. How pleasing to God was this his liberality, an extraordinary prodigy once manifested. One day his mother caught him (so to speak) in a pious theft, in the act of carrying away, to distribute among the poor, some bread belonging to the household. The matron chid him for his indiscretion, as their circumstances could ill afford a charity so unrestrained, and forbade him to do so any more. The boy answered, with a blushing cheek, but an air of superiority,

and an eye beaming confidence in God, "Think you, mother, that giving alms will ever leave us without bread? Look to the cupboard, satisfy yourself, and see." Whereupon she looked, as he desired, and lo! not a loaf was missing. Wherefore with tears she fell upon his neck, recalling her prohibition, and allowing him freely to dispense whatever the house contained.

At a proper age the holy youth was admitted to the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist; from which moment his hunger and thirst for the sacred banquet constantly increased, drew him to its participation as often as possible, and nourished in him that love for Our Lord, which kept him ever in communion with the Spouse of souls. His pious parents were careful to cultivate the extraordinary talents with which God had blessed him, by procuring him early instruction. He was taught the rudiments of the Latin tongue, which he acquired with surprising facility; and so quickly did he apprehend and so correctly retain the truths of religion, that already, in his tender years, he commenced his apostolic career, by teaching the children of his own age their catechism. Our souls begin by times to mould themselves to their future destinies, and to develop those dispositions which befit the station in life which God intends them to occupy. The young soldier displays a love of arms and martial instruments, delights in

mock combats, and is dexterous in gaining the victory: the artist astonishes his admiring parents by some infant prodigy of imitative skill: the little orator begins to sway a youthful audience: and the young ecclesiastic manifests his vocation by a love of altars and church ornaments, and a voluntary initiation in the functions of the ministry. Thus was it with our saint. Wherefore his parents judged it proper to dedicate him, like another Samuel, unto God. In the place where they lived is a devout congregation, erected by Don Tommaso Caracciolo, Archbishop of Taranto, and placed under the protection of St. Cajetan. They are a society of exemplary ecclesiastics, not bound by regular vows, but whose whole object is to promote their own and their neighbours' salvation. Into this holy community Francis obtained admission, and soon became a model of virtue. His piety was the admiration and theme of all, and the Superior resolved to turn his excellent qualities to account, by appointing him to catechise the children, and keep the church in order. So admirably did he fulfil this task, that a representation being made to the Archbishop, he was admitted to receive the tonsure from his hands.

He was now sixteen years of age, and his parents, ever watchful over his interests, sent him to Taranto, that he might study philosophy and theology in the schools of the Society of Jesus. Here his exem-

plary conduct won for him the esteem and affection of his venerable archbishop, who, ever more and more persuaded of his worthiness, advanced him successively to the minor orders, subdeaconship and deaconship. With the consent of his parents he went to Naples, in order to acquire the canon and civil law, at the same time that he prosecuted the study of theology; and was accompanied by his brother Joseph, who, having displayed a wonderful taste for painting, was to cultivate the art under some eminent master. But what Francis had most at heart,—to complete his dedication of himself to God,—occupied his first thoughts on arriving at Naples. Wherefore, procuring dimissorial letters from his archbishop, and a dispensation from the pope, on account of his age, he, to his indescribable contentment and spiritual joy, received priest's orders from the hands of Don Sanchez de Herrera, Bishop of Possuoli. Deeply penetrated with a sense of the awful responsibility he had assumed, and the exalted dignity with which he was invested, Francis, if pure and holy and studious before, became now more watchful, fervent, and assiduous, and dreaded lest the shadow of imperfection should obscure for a moment the virginal whiteness of his soul. And though he lived in the world as one not belonging to the world, still he was now anxious to quit it entirely, and to betake himself to some solitude far removed

from its dissipations and the breath of its polluted atmosphere, where he might have full leisure to attend to his advancement in learning and sanctity. Heaven granted the wish of its favoured servant. A prefect's post became vacant in the College of Nobles of the Society of Jesus. Francis applied for and obtained it, and was, moreover, so far indulged as to be permitted to retain his brother with him. The youths who were submitted to his care were not slow to discover that a saint had been set over them. His countenance and demeanour, his amiable manners and sweet and pious conversation, the austerities and mortifications which all his efforts did not entirely conceal, and, above all, an instance of heroic forbearance, which we shall proceed to relate, soon manifested the exalted degree of perfection which he had attained.

A scholar having broken the rules, was reported to the superiors by Francis, and received punishment; which so incensed the brother of the delinquent, that, not content with pouring out a volley of abuse against our saint, he at last dared to strike him in the face. Though taken by surprise, he manifested not the smallest emotion, uttered not a complaint, but falling upon his knees, humbly turned to him that struck him the other cheek. This act procured for him ever after in the college the appellation of the *holy priest*. After five years' residence there, in the situation of

prefect, our saint, in his twenty-eighth year, felt a sudden and strong inclination to enter the Society. Indeed, he had all the qualifications requisite to become a member, and though the idea presented itself to him for the first time, his mind was prepared to receive it with avidity, from the sentiments which he had long cherished, and which his education among the Jesuits, and his long connexion since with the order, had considerably strengthened. But now an obstacle arose, which it cost the saint no little pains to overcome. This was his father's opposition to the step. He wrote Francis a long and vehement letter, full of pathetic remonstrances, which the saint so affectionately and eloquently answered, as at last to subdue his reluctance, and induce him to acquiesce in the will of God. Thus, all difficulties smoothed, he, on the eve of the Visitation of Our Lady, in the year 1670, being then in his twenty-eighth year, repaired to the house of probation to perform his novitiate.

No sooner did Francis find himself admitted among the novices, and bearing the sacred habit, than his soul burst into lively effusions of gratitude; and with such zeal did he apply himself to the duties now imposed upon him, that the master of the novices soon perceived what an acquisition the Society had made. In sooth, an humbler, or more fervent, mortified, and obedient novice than

Francis, never was found. Scrupulously he complied with the minutest and most irksome ordinances. Meek and affable, he won the hearts of others by his amiable conduct; and, being appointed to preside over the lay-novices, his exalted virtues and profound spirituality speedily wrought a beneficial change in their dispositions. It yet remained to try the pure gold of his virtue in the furnace of afflictions and crosses. Wherefore the superiors commenced upon him a series of severe trials. A lay brother, either through affection for his person, or respect for his sacerdotal character, used to carry water daily to his apartment; and Francis, for allowing such a service to be performed for him, was severely called to task; and not only charged with it, as a crime, but condemned to expiate it by a humiliating penance. So also it fared with everything he did, which could by any force of construction, be distorted into an offence against the rules; and if any offence was committed, suspicion was sure to fall upon him, or punishment devolved upon his shoulders. Meekly, silently, cheerfully, he bore the blame of all that was either done by him, or of which it was pretended he was suspected. Even the severest stroke of any to his sensitive heart, the prohibition to say mass above three times a week, failed to elicit a murmur. Yet would not his dear Lord abandon His affectionate servant, who, for obedience sake, was con-



tent to be torn from His company : but on those days on which Francis was forbidden to celebrate the holy sacrifice, visited him in person (as the saint afterwards revealed to a certain soul in confession, although he spoke as if of another, and not himself), and with His own divine hands, imparted to him the bread of angels. But now the period of his trials closed, and their effect became manifest. Armed at all points, and strengthened against every assailant, he issued from the first year of his novitiate, exulting like a giant, to run the career of apostolic virtue. For now he was sent to Lecce, together with the celebrated Father Agnello Bruno. During three years, these holy missionaries traversed every city and village in the two provinces of Terra d'Otranto, and in that of Apulia, preaching, and converting wherever they went an infinite number of sinners. It used to be said of them, " Father Bruno and Father Girolamo seem not mere mortals, but angels sent expressly to save souls. Nor was Francis, even in his earliest missions, without those singular favours of which we shall have abundant occasion to speak hereafter.

In 1674, our saint was recalled to Naples in order to finish his course of scholastic theology, previous to his being solemnly professed. And now the enlightened director of souls, the eloquent preacher, applied to his studies with the humility

of the most diffident scholar; and, although his talents were of a very high character, insomuch that his *Theological Analyses* were greatly sought after and prized, so far was he from displaying his acquirements, that he used to seek information from his fellow-students, and was, on all occasions, anxious to seem ignorant. To feed in some sort the ardent zeal for the salvation of souls, with which he was inflamed, the superiors allowed him to preach on Sundays and festivals in the public squares, which he did with wonderful fruit.

His studies completed, he was, in 1675, by an especial disposition of Providence, appointed to the church called the Gesu Nuovo, where he commenced the labours of that apostolic career, which he continued for forty years, without intermission, unto the close of his earthly pilgrimage. For the first three years, indeed, his only fixed duty was to give the invitation to Communion, as is the custom in that church, on the third Sunday of every month; which task, however, is arduous enough to discourage any but a most zealous labourer. Yet, even this and the other incessant works of charity in which he spent these three years could not satisfy the cravings of our saint's zeal. Wherefore, on the news reaching him that the mission of Japan was once more to be opened, he importuned the superiors, by letters despatched to Rome, to let him have a part in this glorious enterprise, to the end that he might slake, in some degree, the burn-

ing thirst which devoured him. For his desire had ever been to die for the faith; yet was he content to linger out a painful life, amidst the thorns of martyrdom, even though it should be denied him, to pluck the rose he so much coveted. The answer came, precise and peremptory. He was to consider Naples as his *India*, and to perfect the sacrifice he had made of himself to God, by the surrender of his inclinations. Thenceforward he looked upon Naples as that province in the vineyard of Our Lord, which it pleased the divine husbandman he should exclusively cultivate. Such was the sovereign will of God, manifested in the command of his superiors, and in which our humble saint acquiesced without hesitation; nor was that Providence, which rules events, slow in carrying its purpose into effect. For an occurrence happened, which induced the superiors to intrust the mission of Naples entirely to Francis. In consequence of the calamities in which the kingdom was at that time involved, public prayers were ordered to be offered up during eight days, and on each, a penitential procession of the religious orders in turn had to proceed through the public streets to the Cathedral, where a discourse was to be delivered by a distinguished preacher. Now, when the Jesuits' day arrived, Father Sambiasi, the most celebrated sacred orator of the time, was appointed to preach, and Father Francis to direct the procession. Our

saint fulfilled his part with no less propriety than zeal and energy. When, after a solemn progress, interrupted occasionally, that the exhortations and denunciations of the apostolic man might be repeated and sink deep into the hearts of the people, the procession at last reached the Cathedral: in the space of a few moments, an exceeding throng had filled the church, leaving, in the square without, a large concourse unable to gain admittance. Wherefore this tender shepherd of Jesus Christ, seeing that the people hungered for the bread of life, was moved to compassionate that portion of the flock which was excluded from partaking of the food of God's word, and had not heart to send them away empty; but moved by a sudden impulse of the Holy Spirit, mounted an eminence above the crowd, and lifted up his voice, declaiming against vice with such a fiery and awful energy, while his eye glanced with the zeal and majesty of a prophet, that there arose one universal cry of terror among the hearers, as though they saw hell open to devour them; and throwing themselves upon their faces, with bursts of weeping and loud sobs, they cried to the throne of heaven for mercy, and deprecated vengeance. So that all hearts were moved to compunction, and it was doubted whether the discourse delivered within the church, or that without, had wrought the greater good.

This happy incident determined the superiors,

in 1678, to confide the whole mission to Francis. Here it may be proper to describe the duties such a charge imposed. First, to watch over and maintain the fervour of a pious congregation, who assisted at all the processions, and were the right arm of the missionary. Secondly, to give the monthly invitations to communion; and thirdly, to preach every Sunday and festival day during the year, in the squares or other frequented parts of the city; and this, not merely in Naples, but as it might happen in other towns and provinces of the kingdom. Our saint undertook the first of these obligations with an ardour only surpassed by the success which attended his efforts. He reformed all abuses, and excluded every imperfection, that could retard the spiritual advancement of his scholars. He introduced, or established among them, the custom of frequenting the sacraments every Sunday, and on all the festivals of Our Lady, and the practice of mental as well as vocal prayer, and of public penance and humiliation. The law of the Gospel he was careful to instil into them by frequent exhortations, and he gave efficacy to his precepts by his example. But as the members of this confraternity were destined to be his partners and coadjutors in the apostolic ministry, he was, above all, assiduous in kindling and keeping alive the flames of zeal in their breasts; so that they became his zealous and indefatigable assistants; and not merely

seconded his enterprises with alacrity, but preceded and prepared the way,—removing obstructions, and undermining the ground-works of the enemy, before he came to besiege and batter down the fortress. Besides this, he chose seventy-two of the most efficient and capable, with whom he held counsel twice a month, and despatched them like emissaries of charity into the heart of the city, to spy out the evil that existed, and learn what souls stood most in need of ghostly and bodily succour. Nor was the vigilance he exercised over all, less extended to each in particular. With marvellous dexterity he practised what St. Basil calls the insinuating arts of grace. His charity also and forbearance were unbounded. In sickness he never abandoned them a moment, but continued his affectionate attentions to the last. A member of the congregation, who was of a domineering and contradictory spirit, for many years sought every opportunity of crossing and thwarting the Saint, who not only bore all with sweetness of temper and invincible patience, but when at length the man, in punishment of his sin, fell into poverty, relieved him, together with his family, in the distresses into which they were plunged; nor, by a miracle of charity, ever ceased or relaxed his benevolence, despite of the continued grievances he had to endure from the wretched and ungrateful man whose malignity no generosity could overcome. To the end that he

might keep up the fervour of his congregation, our saint introduced among them the exercise of the Stations, or the *Via Crucis*; being a series of pious meditations on the passion of Our dear Lord, accompanied by appropriate prayers. And, in sooth, it was a moving sight to behold our saint during the performance of this devotion,—all absorbed in the contemplation of the tender mysteries, and ever and anon giving vent to his uncontrollable feelings in copious floods of tears. Another practice, to which our saint had recourse, for the same end of promoting piety, was the visiting the seven churches, in commemoration of Our Redeemer's seven journeys. This was performed in the following manner: a procession, carrying the crucifix, chaunted the litanies as they went, and at every church where they stopped, our saint delivered an impressive exhortation. The devotion terminated with a renewal of the oblation, each one made of himself, to Our Lord Jesus and Our Lady, with vows of perpetual fidelity. But the second duty of preaching in public, embraced a much more extensive range, and required a proportionably greater degree of toil. Now this was the manner of our saint's conduct in this particular. When the Sunday came, he first spent two hours in mental prayer, after which he scourged himself long and severely with the discipline (a practice he observed daily at the hour of rising),

then said Mass, and afterwards recited the Canonical Hours, bare-headed and kneeling, either in the middle of his room, or before the Blessed Sacrament. His private devotions being satisfied, he spent the rest of the morning in the Confessional, or with his congregation. The time of dinner and recreation followed; and the latter he for the most part spent in spiritual entertainment with his Beloved, from which he was summoned to discourse for the space of an hour concerning the passion of Our Lord, and to meditate thereupon. At the appointed hour the Saint and his companions issued into the streets, walked in procession, and then, distributing themselves in divers parts, began to preach to the people. Francis usually mounted a stage, near or opposite to the dancers and mountebanks, who either slunk away at his approach, or vainly strove, through rage and spite, to distract the attention of the audience, who were fascinated by his eloquence. After the discourse, on his knees at the foot of the cross he scourged his shoulders with the discipline, and then once more betook himself to the Confessional, where he remained till the doors of the church were closed. Still his ardour longed for more extensive occupation; and, with the approbation of the superiors and the concurrence of his companions, he repeated the missionary labours on holidays during the week, as well as Sundays. The third duty annexed to

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his charge was the invitation to communion. For nine days preceding the third Sunday of every month he went about the principal streets, together with a few companions, and, ringing a little bell, gave notice of the approaching day of communion; and, to awake the attention and interest of his hearers, delivered, with a loud voice, some short but sententious maxim or weighty admonition from Holy Writ. And so he continued all the morning until dinner-hour, and after noon resumed his task with never-wearying zeal till nightfall.

In the suburbs also of Naples he performed this laborious duty, nor is it easy to conceive the pains and privations it cost him; how, under the scorching sun, or pouring rain, through marshes, over rocks, oftentimes to the peril of life and limb, he journeyed always on foot, until in his latter days he was constrained to ride. Now, when the day arrived, and fifteen, eighteen, or twenty, or more, thousands of communicants appeared, Francis used his strenuous efforts to keep order among them. The troops of men and women who came from the adjoining towns and villages, he received at the door, and placed in their respective posts. The children, crowned with flowers, he welcomed with tears of joy; but it was in imparting to them the life-giving food, that his soul overflowed with tenderness, and the love of Jesus beamed from his countenance, and thrilled in the fervid expressions

with which he excited their devotion. Such were the labours of our saint's mission, and such the manner he discharged them. In his hands this admirable weapon of divine grace became the salvation of thousands. In sooth, a better instrument can never be devised for awakening sinners from their lethargy,—terrifying them by the threats of Divine justice, rousing their faith, encouraging their hopes, and, finally, reconciling them to God by charity. By this, Saint Philip Neri, Saint Vincent of Paul, those holy societies, congregations, and zealous men, who have at various times, in divers parts, fanned the expiring virtue of Christendom once more into a living flame, have been enabled to work miracles of grace. Even now-a-days the piety of the people in Catholic countries is maintained by similar means, and assuredly some such resource is wanting and necessary whenever (and in what part of the world is it not so?) faith is exposed to corruption, and charity is liable to grow cold.

On the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Our Lady, in the year 1682, Francis made his solemn profession; on which occasion he manifested that humility, which distinguished him, by falling on his knees in public, and kissing the feet of the superior, thanking him aloud for admitting into the Society a member so unworthy.

Before we enter farther into the detail of our

saint's apostolic career, it may not be improper to give some notions of that quality whereby he wrought so many wonders, his extraordinary eloquence. His voice was loud and sonorous, so as to be heard distinctly to a great distance; and the style of his preaching was copious, simple, and impressive. No one ever knew the human passions better, or swayed them with more tact and delicacy. Sometimes he stole upon his hearers with an insinuating grace that charmed them into persuasion almost unconsciously; at other times, he would pour out such a volley of arguments, backed with quotations from Scripture or the fathers, and illustrated by all the images of a lively fancy, as to overpower all opposition, and wrest conviction from the most stubborn. His descriptions were forcible and graphic, his pathetic appeals were sure to draw tears; his energy astounded and terrified. Indeed he was accustomed to speak with so much vehemence, as occasionally to bring blood to his lips: he often talked himself hoarse and till his palate was parched, and once, in the midst of an animated invective against sins, he dropped down suddenly and swooned away. The method he ordinarily pursued in his discourses, was first to paint the enormous malice of sin and the terrors of the Divine judgments, in colours so striking, as to raise self-indignation and alarm in sinners. Then, changing his tone with a

master-skill, he dwelt upon the sweetness and mildness of Jesus Christ, so as to make despair give way to hope, and the most hardened melt into compunction. This was the moment that he seized, to pour in an appeal so tender and so overpowering, as to cause them to bend their knees before the image of their crucified Lord, and to implore, through those precious conduits of grace, His gaping wounds, in tears and sobs and broken accents, forgiveness and reconciliation. It was usual for him to subjoin, at the conclusion, some striking example of God's chastisements or favours, whereby his audience might carry away a deeper and more lively impression of the truths he had just been inculcating. His eloquence, however, was less the result of any natural talent than of his ardent love of God and zeal for his service. When he was to preach, he used to note down in few words his arguments, authorities, and examples, and at the foot of the crucifix communing with God, prepared himself to treat on his affairs with men. Thence, like another Moses, he descended all on fire from his colloquy with the Deity. Accordingly it was God himself who often inspired him at the moment with expressions of supernatural efficacy. In 1707, a violent eruption of Vesuvius on a sudden darkened the air over the city, and changed broad day into thickest night. In the greatest consternation the people

flocked to the square of St. Catherine, where the saint met them, and lifting up his voice in the midst of the assembled multitude, so as to be heard by all, uttered these words in a prophetic and mournful voice: "Naples, what time is it? Naples, what time is it?" This brief but enigmatic expression smote the hearts of all with such instantaneous fear, that many profligate sinners came to confess their sins, and thenceforward led a religious life. In 1688, Naples was visited by an earthquake that overthrew many houses; whereupon the people rushed into the streets to avoid destruction. "Cease from sin," cried out the saint, "if you would wish the chastisement to cease!" which words, in the mouth of so holy and revered a man, made a great impression and produced much fruit.

His sermons were usually followed by the repentance and conversion of five or six or as many as ten females of abandoned life, who came, tearing their hair, and, weeping bitterly, implored permission to do penance for their sins in some convent. Once, a wretched person of this description, before whose house the servant of God was preaching, endeavoured to interrupt him by raising all manner of discordant sounds, which our saint never so much as noticed, but proceeded to the end of his discourse. Sometime afterwards passing by the same house and seeing it shut up, "Ah," said he

to one of the bystanders, "what is become of Catherine?" "She died suddenly yesterday," was the reply. "Dead! let us go in and see her;" and entering the house, he went up stairs and found the corpse laid out. Then, while a breathless silence reigned amongst a numerous concourse of spectators, "Catherine," said he, "tell me, where are you?" And twice repeated the self-same words. When now a third time he had spoken in an authoritative tone, the eyes of the corpse opened and the lips moved, as was seen by all, and a weak hollow voice replied, "in hell! in hell!" Whereupon all present, seized with terror, fled out of the room, and the holy man himself departing, repeated several times, "In hell! in hell! Omnipotent God! tremendous God! in hell!" Which circumstances and words produced such an effect, that many were afraid to return home without having confessed. Another time, he described the outrage committed on God by sin in such glowing terms, that a child began to weep bitterly. "What!" exclaimed the saint, "does this young innocent shed tears while many a sinner is unmoved?" Now the child's father was a great sinner, and being present at this discourse, was so affected by the saint's words, as to make a general confession and amend his life. "What, my poor daughter," once asked the holy man in public of a woman, who having long led a

disorderly life, was at last converted by one of his sermons, "what have you gained by sin? What wealth, what pleasure?" "Nothing, nothing," answered she, in tears, "even the clothes I wear are not my own, but borrowed for hire." "Good God! hear ye that?" cried the saint, "and so fares it with every sinner." Once he preached near a house of ill-fame, out of which, in the midst of his discourse, a carriage prepared to drive; whereupon the persons in it were requested to wait a few moments, and not interrupt the servant of God; but they contemptuously cried out to the coachman to drive on. "Blessed Jesus!" exclaimed the saint, holding the crucifix before the horses, "since these goddesses have no respect for Thee, the brute beasts at least shall do Thee homage." And in very deed the animals sank down on their knees, and would not stir till the discourse was over. On another occasion, when our saint, though he strove ever so, could not succeed in gathering around him an audience—"In sooth," said he, "what fruit do I reap in Naples by preaching? I spend my breath here to little purpose, whereas were I to preach in the forest, the very lions and bears would crouch down and listen." At this moment a dog passing, stopped whilst the saint was speaking. "There," said he, "that dumb animal has more sensibility than thousands of sinners." Which circumstance so

struck a woman who happened to witness it, that she conceived a lively sorrow for her sins, and repaired her past misconduct by a virtuous life.

These facts serve to shew with what marvellous success our saint availed himself of even trifling circumstances to effect the purposes of grace. It was matter of surprise to all who knew him, how he could possibly go through the labours he achieved, which were more than sufficient to occupy five missionaries, and far beyond the natural strength of his weak constitution and emaciated frame; so that it was not unreasonably thought, that to prolong such exertions for the space of forty years, he must have been supported by a miracle. He was in constant attendance on the hospitals, prisons, and galleys, besides visiting the sick in their houses, and ministering to the spiritual necessities of monasteries, asylums, confraternities, and schools. The consequence of these labours of our saint, was the amendment of numberless sinners, and the conversion of several Turkish infidels to the faith of Jesus Christ, and the introduction of a surprising regularity of manner in those habitual abodes of wretchedness and vice,—the galleys and the prisons. His zeal also reduced the soldiery from a state of the greatest disorder to the most edifying piety. Still, however, his ardour, which knew no bounds, panted for more fruit; accordingly he used to go and preach during the night



in the very hot-beds and receptacles of vice, that sinners might be awed into repentance by the novelty and solemnity of this warning, at the hour when they least apprehended interruption. Once our saint, being in prayer in his chamber, felt a sudden inspiration to go out and preach, which, by the advice of his superiors, he obeyed. For some time he wandered in the dark he knew not whither, till he came to the corner of a street, where he began to preach on the necessity of immediate correspondence with the Divine grace; and having finished, returned home, satisfied with having complied with his duty, though ignorant to what purpose or with what fruit. The next morning, however, a young woman came to him to confession, and, with signs of the bitterest compunction, told him that being in company the evening before with her paramour, her attention was suddenly arrested by the voice of the saint in the street, denouncing God's vengeance against unrepenting and procrastinating sinners, whereat she was so terrified that she began to exhort her partner in guilt to break off their unlawful intercourse. To this, however, he would by no means consent, and even laughed and jeered at the holy man's threats: when to her horror she beheld their awful fulfilment. For the man suddenly ceasing to speak, she found him a breathless corpse, his soul having taken its flight to God's tribunal, while the words

of blasphemy were yet upon his lips. Plunged into the greatest alarm by this catastrophe, she implored pardon of God with sighs and tears, and now came to effect her reconciliation, and to expiate her past scandals by a life of penance.

No difficulties, dangers, or sufferings, could arrest the career of Francis. Oftentimes he was exposed to grievous insults and injuries, all which he bore with Christian meekness, and not unfrequently made the means of salvation to others. Our saint was the determined enemy of mountebanks, strolling players, and all such wretches as gain a livelihood by feeding the vices of the multitude. One of these pests, while reciting a lascivious comedy to entertain the mob, perceived the holy man ascending the stage, and apprehensive of his well-known power over the people, met him with a tremendous blow on the cheek, while another hurled him with violence to the ground. The saint arose unhurt by the fall, and unruffled by the brutal insult: "I know not," said he, "by what offence I have merited this treatment, but if I have done you an injury, here in presence of all I ask pardon." Another time, when grossly insulted in public, he threw himself on his knees and kissed the feet of his aggressor. Such, however, was the respect in which the holy man was held, that even vice paid homage to his sanctity, and fled at his approach. Once a man whom he

reproved drew his sword, and would have slain him, had not his companions interfered. He was preaching, on one occasion, when some persons presented themselves at the door of a neighbouring house, and distracted and scandalized the audience by their lewd language and behaviour. They were mildly admonished to desist; instead of which, the vile woman to whom the house belonged drew some of the crowd in with her. "This is too much!" exclaimed our saint, and forthwith advanced towards the house. His companions besought him for God's sake not to expose his life. "What," said he, holding up the crucifix, "with the example of our dear Saviour before me, shall I be appalled by death, or refuse to pay such a price for preventing sin!" On entering the house, however, not only was he unmolested, but respectfully saluted by all; and having quietly brought them back into the street, continued his discourse, which produced surprising fruit.

In sooth, he knew no danger when God's honour was at stake. Once, in a procession, he stopped at a certain door, moved by a sudden inspiration, and knocking loudly, cried out: "Open, infernal fury—school-mistress of hell, open." And after some time, a withered wretch, hideous and deformed, presented herself. Inside were discovered half-a-dozen young men paying court to as many maidens, whom this she-devil was training

to wickedness, and who were on the point of sacrificing their virtue. "Why, this," exclaimed the saint, "is the school of Satan, the very antechamber of hell. How dare you," said he to the young men, "attempt the virtue of these innocent souls for which God has shed his blood. Begone!" and, struck by his commanding mien and words, the young men dared not to disobey; while our saint, having rescued the poor girls from the verge of ruin, had them provided for in some asylum, where they were able to preserve their virtue and their souls.

Innumerable were the risks our saint incurred. Once he stopped a youth who was entering one of the abodes of vice, imploring him to forego his criminal designs. The young man, blinded by passion, fiercely struck him; and when the holy man, falling upon his knees, still clung to him, he prepared to plunge his dagger in his bosom, and would have killed him, had not the bystanders prevented it. He preached once before the house of a young person, who, by her wit and beauty, ensnared numbers. A large company was with her at the time, and hearing the saint's voice, strove to drown it with sounds of merriment, in hopes of getting rid of him. On a sudden the holy preacher cried out, in a stentorian voice, "Ho! there, all you in that accursed house, who are being seduced by Satan, quit it instantly."

Whereupon one only left. "Come," said the saint, "the rest must follow, or I shall *drive* them out." Still no one else appeared. Wherefore, carrying the crucifix and chanting the litany of Our Lady, the saint went up stairs, and darted such an indignant glance upon all present, that the apartment was cleared in an instant.

Our saint had to experience yet more mortifying contradictions. Yielding to certain representations, the cardinal archbishop forbade him to preach any more. The humble saint never breathed a complaint or remonstrance, but consoled his grief and fed his zeal by a perpetual attendance in the confessional. But soon after, moved by the conduct of the saint, as well as by the entreaties of wiser and more virtuous advisers, who assured him that he was depriving Naples of its apostle, the cardinal gave Francis back his faculties. For the purpose of proving his virtue, the superior forbade him to quit the house without obtaining express permission, a command with which Francis for several months scrupulously complied, till the father, edified by his humility and convinced of his virtue, removed the restraint. Even the lay-brother who was assigned him, being a man of morose temper, was a sore cause of trouble to him. Where his zeal thought to effect most good, it often met with the harshest construction and reproof. He was abused as a med-

dling busy-body, a disturber of the public quiet. He was often overwhelmed with outrages, and more than once turned out of doors. A certain cavalier had such an aversion for Francis, that he could not bear his presence. A large sum was entrusted to the saint to convey to this person, and once and again he sought an interview without being able to attain it. "Well!" said the cavalier, who admitted him at last, "what brings you here? the usual story! charity, I suppose—I've nothing for you." "My lord duke," replied the saint, "I certainly have a small favour to ask, which is, that you would exercise your benevolence so far as to furnish a poor person with money to purchase a bed to sleep upon. And this cannot inconvenience you, for in the purse I here present, you will find two hundred ducats, which I have been the means of restoring to you." The cavalier exclaimed, in a rage, "That's not all." "Nay," replied the saint, "I know nothing, but that such a sum was given to me."—"And by whom?"—"I cannot inform you." Whereupon he snatched the purse out of the saint's hands, and turning his back upon him, left him to depart. But not long after he had occasion to recal him: for falling dangerously ill, and, by the light of the death-taper beholding things under a new aspect, he was anxious to conciliate the man he had so grossly insulted; and though he was then forty miles distant from

Naples, had him sent for on purpose. The saint assisted him at the hour of his death, to his great spiritual advantage and consolation.

His charity, indeed, towards those who injured him, was remarkable. Attempting one day to quell a strife among some soldiers, he received from one of them an inhuman blow upon the head that drew blood copiously: and when the captain hearing of it would have had the man severely punished for the sacrilege, our saint did not desist from his entreaties until he had obtained his pardon. Even in the tribunal of confession he was not secure from insults. Two poor women had come from a great distance to confession, and were anxious to get home early, as there was no one to take care of their houses in their absence. Whereupon the saint requested a man, who was also waiting, to allow them precedence. This he did, but with a very bad grace, throwing out a slanderous insinuation against the saint, who, after he had despatched the women, heard the confession of this very man, and treated him with so much sweetness and charity, that he sent him away with an altered temper and feelings of esteem and admiration.

One of the most frequent and effectual instruments which our saint employed for the sanctification of souls, were the spiritual exercises of Saint Ignatius. It is impossible to conceive with what

energy and fruit the holy man delivered the meditations which compose this course of Christian philosophy. Often he was obliged to interrupt his discourses, that the sighs, tears, and sobs which they occasioned, might have time to subside. Private individuals, as well as communities, ignorant and learned, the aged and the young of both sexes, alike profited by his exhortations, and to such a pitch of enthusiasm did he excite the compunction of sinners, that they openly declared their offences, and inflicted such severe chastisements upon themselves, that it was necessary to restrain their ardour. Nor was this a transient effect, like that which a torrent produces, setting all in a tumult and confusion for the moment, but a durable benefit; hence ensued many conversions of sinners, who, for ten, twenty, or thirty, or even fifty years, had thrown off the yoke of religion; and, indeed, our saint possessed a wonderful tact for bringing back sinners, as the following examples may show. A certain man for five-and-twenty years had not been to the sacraments, till admonished more than once in a dream to have recourse to our saint, he at last took courage and obeyed, to his own great happiness and the glory of Our Lady, to whose mercy he was indebted for the admonition.

Another, commencing his confession, was asked by the saint, how long it was since he had last



made it ; whereat he burst into tears, and besought the holy man not to dismiss him, for that he was a great sinner ; but he, bidding him not be discouraged, asked him if it was ten, twenty, or fifty years ? “ Fifty,” said he, “ exactly, father, have I kept aloof from God.” “ Kept aloof from God ?” said Francis, “ why should you avoid so tender a parent,—a Saviour, who has poured out the last drop of His blood for you ? Nay, rather turn and *meet* Him who has been running after you so long.” And the man confessed with sincerity and compunction all the crimes he had committed, and thenceforward led a virtuous life. An inveterate sinner was one time dying without giving a sign of hope, or manifesting a wish to repent. After the saint had long urged him in vain to confide in the mercies of God, suddenly changing his tone, he thus addressed him : “ Do you think that God incurs any obligation, if you accept his offer of Paradise, or that he must need go into mourning if you prefer hell ? how many princes and nobles are lost, whom God suffers to perish ; and do you suppose God cares more for you ? If you *will* be damned, be so ;” and he turned away from him. But this sudden and impressive address wrought such a change in the dying man, that breaking out into an agony of grief and alarm, he conjured the saint not to abandon him, confessed his sins with every demonstration of sincere contrition, and expired

full of hope. In sooth no heart, however hardened, could choose but melt at the exhortations of the holy man. A young man once threw himself at the feet of the saint, exclaiming, "Father, behold here not a human being, but a very demon: a soul abandoned to despair. Since, many years ago, a confessor denied me absolution, I have never been to my duty, never heard mass, or even entered a church, or so much as recited a Hail Mary, or made the sign of the cross. Alas, I have even gone so far in wickedness as to league myself with Satan, and to have recourse to his aid, through witches and such as are cunning in the black art. Can I, after such a life, presume to hope,—dare I ask for mercy?"—"Why not, my son?" the tender saint replied; "'tis true thy crimes have been great, yet doth the mercy of God surpass their magnitude; was it not for sinners that Jesus Christ died? There is yet pardon for thee, if thou wilt seek it earnestly, and fervently, and set about reforming instantly thy way of life. These consoling words revived the sinner long dead in iniquity, and gave to God a persevering penitent. Yet more remarkable is the following occurrence, which the saint was accustomed to relate in his public sermons. One day a young man presented himself before him, with a grave and devout air: "Father," he said, "I am come to declare to you the wonders of God's mercy in my regard, and

to beseech you, both to return him thanks for his signal favours, and to counsel me how I may best profit by them. So many years (and he mentioned the number) have elapsed since I was addicted to a certain vice, which struck such deep root into my soul, that God permitted my reason to be clouded, and my heart to be changed, so that I fancied myself a beast; and in this persuasion, I stripped myself of clothing, and wandered naked through the fields, and crawled along the ground on all-fours, exposed to the sun and rain, the frost and snow, in company with the filthiest of animals, partaking their food, and imitating their cries: After a year of this life it pleased God to take compassion on this poor wretch, and to restore me to my reason. Words cannot describe the confusion and shame I felt, and well did I perceive that this had been a punishment of my sins. I made the best confession I was able, as soon as I could, and have lived ever since, by God's grace, up to his divine laws. What think you—hath he not used unparalleled mercy towards me?" Our saint, embracing him, said—"In very deed doth the sinner become like the brute beast that hath no understanding." He approved his present conduct, confirmed his sentiments, and comforted him, by the assurance that God would never withdraw his grace from him so long as he was faithful to his resolutions. An assassin, who had been hired to

murder some persons, passing a crowd to whom the saint was preaching, stopped on his road, saying within himself, "May be he whom I seek is amongst this multitude." Whereupon he stood to observe, and could not help hearing the discourse of the preacher; and hearing, could not choose but stay to listen, being, as it were, fascinated to the spot. When suddenly these words caught his ear—"Thousands bewail past sins, and dost thou, wretched sinner meditate new crimes? Unhappy, whom neither the arm of God stretched out to launch his thunderbolts, nor hell opening beneath thy feet to swallow thee, can deter from thy wickedness!" His guilty conscience smote him, his heart turned away from evil, he confessed his enormities, and from a murderer became a saint. A youth of disordered life was so moved by another sermon of Francis, that in public, overcoming every human respect, he cast himself at the foot of the crucifix, exclaiming, "Father, I am lost: for nearly twenty years I have not been to a confessor;" and so saying, wept bitterly, and lashed himself with the discipline. Then, accompanying the confraternity to the Gesu Nuovo, he sought our saint, who, like a tender father, fell upon his neck and embraced him, exhorting him to confidence, and assisting him to reconcile himself to God. The young man not only forsook his

former vicious courses, but exhibited a model of repentance, and persevered in an exemplary life.

Another eminent quality of our saint was his admirable skill in directing souls and giving spiritual counsel; so that it is matter of doubt, whether his public exhortations or private instructions produced the greater good. Marvellous was his dexterity in solving difficulties, relieving scruples, and settling disputes. Two nuns had once an altercation about a certain cell, to which each asserted a right. Neither would cede her pretensions, which were angrily maintained, and the whole community was thrown into scandalous confusion by the efforts of the candidates and their partizans. At length Francis was called to adjust this dispute. "Verily," said the servant of God, addressing one of the parties, "the matter must be of exceeding moment, that for a few feet of ground you are content to risk heaven." This observation struck the nun so forcibly that she acknowledged and bewailed her folly, and peace and harmony were immediately restored.

But if on the one hand the happiest results were experienced by all who attended to his counsels, on the other, grievous chastisements often befel those who neglected or despised his warnings. A youth of depraved conduct had the effrontery to laugh and jeer at the remonstrances of the holy man, and

dared even to heap abuse upon him. Our saint bore all meekly, in imitation of our Blessed Saviour, "who when he was reviled, did not revile." But God would not suffer such a crime to go unpunished, for shortly after the young man perished miserably in a broil. Another had for the space of eight years dismissed all thoughts of God or of his soul, and had abandoned himself to the most criminal indulgences. A stroke of apoplexy brought him to the verge of death, but not to a sense of his guilt or of the dreadful danger he had incurred. Wherefore, to give him a foretaste of the chastisement that awaited him, in the hope of awaking him from his apathy, hot water was applied to the soles of his feet and fire to his hands, which he no sooner felt, than he began to shriek and rage like a very demon, yet was not one whit the better disposed. Wherefore our saint taking in his hand the crucifix, addressed him with gentleness, saying, "Lo, thy dear Redeemer, with open arms, invites thee to return to Him. See those gaping wounds, that blood streaming to wash away thy guilt, what hast thou to fear?" Then he presented the divine image to the wretched man to kiss, but he, turning fiercely away, muttered a horrid imprecation and expired. But it is now time to take a rapid view of his labours out of Naples.

The fame of his great achievements in this city occasioned earnest solicitations to be made, that the

field of his exertions might be extended to the provinces. But Naples was by no means willing to surrender its apostle, though for a short time only; and the intervention of several distinguished persons was requisite to effect the desired object. In upwards of a hundred missions, which our saint in consequence undertook, he traversed all the provinces of the kingdom, with the exception of the Calabrias. Incredible were the hardships and privations he encountered,—the difficulties and obstacles he surmounted in the execution of this work of charity. Wherever he went, the clergy and most respectable inhabitants came out to meet him, and gave him an honourable reception. Without losing a moment, the indefatigable servant of God commenced his career by an opening discourse, and an invocation of the tutelar saint and guardian angels of the place. At day-break he celebrated mass and spent the morning in a somewhat similar manner to what has been already described in speaking of his missions in Naples. It was an edifying and affecting sight to witness the communion of the children, and the procession of penitents through the streets. But when at length he came to give the concluding discourse, and to repeat his farewell admonitions, then was it that the fruit of his exertions was perceptible, and that the seed of grace striking deep root gave signs of vigorous growth and duration; for when he exhorted the people to

perseverance, with one voice they promised to preserve inviolably their engagements; and when he imparted his last blessing, with his customary "adieu, to meet again in Paradise," words cannot describe, nor imagination conceive, the emotions of the multitude.

Not always, however, did our saint meet with such consoling encouragement to his zeal. The devil, raging to behold so many souls redeemed from his snares by the active charity of the holy man, spared no pains to molest and baffle him, by raising against him hosts of enemies, who threw discredit upon his conduct, fomented suspicions and jealousies, and waged war against him by every possible art, that bad passions or the evil spirit could suggest. Hence it not unfrequently happened that he experienced insults instead of welcome, on his arrival at places where calumnies had beforehand been industriously spread, and that for some time he found a deaf ear turned to his exhortations; yet, finally, his invincible forbearance and persevering charity, his saintly demeanour—itsself a confutation of his calumniators—triumphed over all opposition. Few details respecting these memorable missions have been recorded, but some, preserved by the testimony of eye-witnesses, have been rescued from the oblivion of time. When the holy man was on his way to Capua, the carriage got stuck immoveably in the mire of a deep ditch, and



resisted all the efforts of the driver to extricate it. Whereupon, after the manner of this class of persons, he began to curse and swear. "O my son," cried the saint, "blaspheme not for God's sake." "Why, father," said the man, "would not a saint swear in such an infernal hobble, with nobody near, nor a chance of any one's coming to assist us?" "Have patience," rejoined the holy man; and as he was yet speaking, two robust young men, turning the corner of the road, volunteered their services and relieved the travellers from their difficulty; after which, without waiting to be thanked, they disappeared. Wherever he went he reconciled enemies, converted sinners, besides performing many prodigies.

He had to contend against obstacles of another description. He applied to Monsignor Capece, bishop of Cheti, a capital town of the Abruzzi, for leave to preach there. "Certainly," replied the bishop: "but Father Francis, you must be forewarned ours is a sensible and cultivated city, accustomed and able to weigh well the force of reason, and therefore you will at once perceive that certain addresses to the senses, such as the exposition of the crucifix or images of the Virgin and other saints, things admirable in themselves, would here be quite out of place, and calculated to do more harm than good." "Your lordship's wishes shall assuredly be attended to," said the humble saint,

“till such time at least as you yourself shall deem it proper to recall them.”

Not long after the prelate felt an acute pain, for which he could not account; but his conscience troubling him, he sent word to the saint, that in regard to the subject of their conversation he might use his discretion. The bishop had himself more than one occasion of witnessing the fruit which the practices he was disposed to condemn, invariably produce; and our saint knew so well how to employ them, that the mission of Cheti succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectations. With the like fruit did Francis perform the missions in various other towns, working conversions and prodigies too numerous to be here mentioned.

In the church of the Gesù Nuovo, at the right hand of the high altar, in a chapel dedicated to Our Lady and St. Anne, repose the bodies of one hundred and sixty martyrs, each in a separate urn, richly adorned, and arranged on either side of the altar. Among these are the relics of St. Cyr. He was originally a physician, but forsook his profession to lead an eremitical life. During one of the bloody persecutions raised against the Christians, he issued from his solitude to encourage the fervour and stimulate the energies of his brethren. But, being seized by the idolators, he was made to undergo the greatest torments, and at length received the crown of martyrdom at Canopus,

a city of Egypt, together with several companions, on the last day of January, in the year of Our Lord 288. The second council of Nicea mentions several miracles wrought by this glorious Christian hero, in defence of the sacred images. Whether from an especial inspiration, or a vision, or for some other motive, Francis conducted all his missions under the patronage of St. Cyr. From that time it was a perpetual contest between the martyr and the saint, which should procure the other greater honour. Francis recurred to St. Cyr in all his undertakings. He never visited a sick person but he blessed him with the relic of the martyr. He used also the oil which had burned in the lamp before his body, and water blessed with his relics, for holy purposes. Nor was he content until he had obtained the requisite permission to establish a festival in his honour, that public homage might be paid him. The third Sunday in May was the day fixed upon. And during the course of his life he collected a sum of money sufficient to provide a silver statue of the martyr in his hermit's dress, and bearing a palm in his left hand. But this devotion was abundantly repaid by reciprocal favours on the part of the holy martyr, as we shall show on another occasion.

It would be superfluous to enlarge upon the particular virtues of our saint; his public life

being rather the subject of this history. Yet are we unwilling to pass over unnoticed his great and fervent love of Jesus Christ. Especially he honoured and worshipped him in his Divine infancy, his sacred passion, and his adorable sacrament. When he meditated upon these mysteries he was always absorbed and penetrated with love; and when he approached the sacrament of the altar, his countenance glowed as though he stood before a fire. Nothing provoked his indignation, or drew down his severe rebuke, so much as disrespect towards the Blessed Eucharist. He removed many abuses. He would not suffer any levity in the Church, and reproved a lady of quality who had remained seated during the consecration. In like manner he was tenderly devoted to Our blessed Lady. For twenty-two years he preached a sermon in her praise and honour every week. To youth especially it was his custom to recommend this devotion as the surest preservation of innocence, and the best remedy after sin; saying that one could hardly be saved who felt no devotion towards the Mother of God. Mary was his counsellor in doubt, his comfort in toil, his strength in all his enterprises, his refuge in danger and distress. He experienced an inexpressible delight whenever he recited the rosary of Our tender Mother. He was likewise particularly devoted to his angel guardians, St. Francis Xavier, and St. Januarius. The

charity, humility, purity, and obedience of our saint were never surpassed; nor did God withhold from him those gifts with which he is pleased at times to favour his chosen servants. Of these we shall now cite a few instances. He enjoyed frequent extacies, which happened more than once in the presence of many witnesses; particularly on one occasion, when he was delivering an exhortation on Communion. His face shone at times with a radiance so bright, that, like that of Moses, it dazzled the eyes of the beholders. Nor was it by any natural means that his voice, even when hoarse and weak, could be distinctly heard at an amazing distance. That wonderful gift also, which authentic testimony proves several saints to have possessed, namely, the power of being present in more than one place at times—between which no physical interval is perceptible—was not denied to our Saint. His prophetic gift was very remarkable, being sometimes exercised seriously and openly,—at others playfully and enigmatically, as though he would not be thought to have the power to utter predictions.

A young maiden was in doubt whether she ought to marry, or enter a religious state, and consulted the saint. “You incur greater danger by remaining in the world,” said he; “and be not dismayed at the thought of having to spend a long and laborious life. How old are you?”—“Seven-

teen.”—“Just so many more years will complete your pilgrimage.” The prediction was exactly fulfilled. The young lady became a Capuchin nun, advanced rapidly in virtue, and, at the expiration of the term foretold, died in the odour of sanctity. The wife of a certain nobleman once expressed a wish to the saint that she might not survive her husband. “Fear not,” he said, “you will both die young, but your death will occur first.” Accordingly she died on the 5th of August, 1727, in her thirty-third year, her husband in the following March, aged thirty-nine, both attesting on their death-bed the saint’s prediction. A poor woman lost an infant one year old, and not having means to bury it, carried it to the church, and placed it in the confessional of Father Francis. When the holy man came into the church he saw the celebrated penitent Maria Aloisa Cassier, and addressing her, said, “Look into my confessional, you will find a child that has been abandoned; take charge of it till I can find a place for it.” She instantly obeyed, but, lifting up the covering, turned to the saint, “Father,” said she, “it is dead.”—“No, no,” said he, “it is asleep;” and at the same time made the sign of the cross on its forehead, and touched its lips with holy water, and lo! the child opened its eyes, and began to breathe. “There, call the mother, who is standing at the bottom of the church.” The poor woman at first

would not come; nor, when she saw the infant, believe that it could be her's. But when it stretched out its arms and recognized her, she clasped it to her bosom, ravished with joy, and, receiving from the saint a considerable alms, returned home.

A young nun once presented herself before the saint to make her confession. "Begone," said he, harshly, "I neither can nor will hear you."—"How!" she exclaimed, astonished, "your reverence goes in search of profligates, and will you reject a spouse of Jesus Christ?"—"And do you come to confession," replied the saint, "without examination, contrition, purpose of amendment, or the least spark of devotion?" The religious thereupon began to look into her interior, and being made aware of her disorders, amended her life. Our saint, by his prayers and intercession, procured many miraculous favours to sick and distressed persons; and for his sake his patron St. Cyr wrought innumerable similar wonders. In a certain monastery a nun was afflicted with horrible convulsions. Father Francis was at last sent for. "I bring you," said he, on entering, "good tidings; a physician who cures all diseases;" and gave her the relic of St. Cyr to kiss. "Have you confidence in this physician? Will you invoke him? and henceforth be devout towards him?" She replied in the affirmative. "You are cured then," said he, "already; rise, and come to choir presently, to

return thanks to God." And, to the surprise and consolation of herself, as well as all present, she did as he desired.

Our saint was favoured with the foreknowledge of his dissolution. On the death of his brother he observed, "A year hence we shall meet;" and while he was still in health, taking leave of the nuns of St. Mary del Divino Amore, "My dear daughters," said he, "this is the last time I shall ever address you. Do not forget me in your prayers, and adieu till we meet in Paradise." When he was sick, the festival of St. Cyr drawing near, "I shall not live to see it," he exclaimed. And finally, when the physician that attended him paid him his last visit, he thanked him for his attentions, and said, "We shall never see each other again on this side of the grave, for Monday will be the last day of my life."

During the month of March, 1715, at the beginning of Lent, he was, for the third time, giving the retreat to the students of the noble college, when suddenly he felt a racking fever assail his limbs, insomuch that he was obliged to be carried home. In a few days, however, it was brought under, and, though weak, he resumed his usual labours. Still his health declined, and towards December his constitution appeared quite broken. Anxious to preserve a life so valuable, the superior sent him to take the mineral waters of Puzzuoli. But



he experienced not the smallest benefit; and in March 1716, returning to Naples, took up his abode in the infirmary. The agonies of torture which he suffered are not to be expressed, yet a murmur never escaped him. "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who consoles us in all tribulation," was his constant exclamation. When some one approached to sympathise with him, the heroic man crossed his hands on his breast, saying, "Crescant in mille millia." He was told of the great good he had achieved. "Nothing, nothing," he cried, "the fault I have most to apprehend, is my slothfulness." He was exhorted to invoke St. Cyr, in order to be restored to health, and to be allowed a few more years to spend in the service of God. "Ah, no!" said he, "the saint and I have come to an understanding on that point; the matter is now settled." The favour he *did* ask, was to see the statue already mentioned, finished, before his death. This was granted him. "Now," said he, "I die content;" and, with the permission of his superiors, he distributed thirty small reliquaries, containing particles of the saint's relics among the contributors to this pious work.

Death now hastened on apace; wherefore, on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross, making a general confession, he received the viaticum, and six days later was anointed. All night long, he gave

vent to the fulness of his heart in such expressions as the following—" Let us bless the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; let us praise and exalt him for ever. Great is the Lord, and exceedingly to be praised, in the city of our God, on his holy mountain." Then kissing the wounds of the crucifix, weeping, he cried out, "Remember, dear Jesus, that this soul has cost the ransom of every drop of thy precious blood." And when the infirmarian entreated him to pray rather with his heart than his lips, by reason of the distress which speaking occasioned him: "Ah my dear brother," said he, "whatsoever we think, or say of so great a God, his greatness is beyond all thought and expression." Then fixing his eyes upon a devout image of Our Lady, "Ah, Mary," said he, "my dearest mother, thou hast ever cherished me like a loving parent, though I have been thy too, too unworthy child. Complete now the measure of thy mercies in my regard, by obtaining for me the love of thy divine Son." Then, as though at the gate of Paradise, he exclaimed, "How great is the house of the Lord ! Blessed are they who dwell in Thy house, O Lord ; for ever and ever shall they sing thy praise. Ye holy angels, why delay ye ? Open the gates of Justice. Entering therein, I will praise the Lord."

Still his malady lasted some days longer. Nor, though our saint had repeatedly expressed a wish

to be left alone, it was impossible to keep away numbers, who pressed to see him for the last time, to kiss his hand, and to receive his farewell blessing. With an amiable sweetness, he welcomed them all, and seeing their sorrow, "Weep not," he said, "I go to heaven, where I shall remember you, and be better able to assist you." But what sunshine so serene is not occasionally clouded, what sea so calm as never to be ruffled by a storm? It pleased God to enhance our saint's virtue by submitting it to a dreadful trial. The frame of the holy man shook under the severity of the struggle. With a loud cry he called upon the Almighty, the eternal Son, Our Lady, and all the saints, to save him. Being asked the cause of this fearful commotion, "I am fighting," he exclaimed, "fighting! pray for God's sake that I may not perish." Then, as if rebuking the evil spirit, he cried—"No, it shall never be. Begone! I have no part with you. His countenance at last brightening, he repeated softly, "'Tis well, 'tis well!" and so saying, chanted the *Magnificat* and *Te Deum*. He was anxious to receive the holy sacrament, but the superior did not judge it advisable, as he had lately been to communion; and the humble saint acquiesced. He now fell into his agony; the recommendation of a departing soul was recited; and, amidst the tears of his brethren, Francis di Girolamo expired, about mid-day, on

Monday, the 11th of May, 1716, in the seventy-fourth year of his age, and the forty-sixth of his religious life, having spent forty years in the labours of an apostolic career.

Although, from a motive of prudence the superior forbade the bell to be tolled, to announce his death, there needed no sound to convey the intelligence through the city; it was read in every countenance, and spread so rapidly, that in a short time the *Gesù Nuovo* was completely filled with an immense concourse of people of all classes. The infirmarian being desirous of keeping some relic of so holy a man, before he laid him out in the sacerdotal habit, pared off a piece of the hard skin of the sole of his foot. But the pious theft soon became apparent, though he had used every effort to conceal it; for the blood began to flow from the wound so freely, as not merely to stain the linen, but to fill a phial, holding three or four ounces: which portion being preserved, retained during three months its ruddiness and liquidity, and wrought many cures.

In the evening the body was carried into the church, that the office might be chanted, and a detachment of Swiss guards was hardly sufficient to protect it from the violence and indiscreet devotion of the crowd; indeed, three psalms had scarcely been sung, before they broke through all restraint, and pressed towards the body, eager to carry away some relic, especially to dip their handkerchiefs in

the blood, which still streamed from the wound already mentioned, and overflowed the bier. At length, the body was removed into a side chapel, where it was secured, against farther violence, by iron railing, through which, at the same time, it was visible to all. Still it was impossible to refuse the prayer of several devout persons, to be permitted to approach, and kiss the hand of the saint, and at night some artists were admitted to take likenesses and effigies of him. A throng of suppliants crowded to the church next morning, and implored the saint to deliver them from their evils and distempers. Nor were they disappointed. Many cures took place on the spot, and the church again and again echoed with the cry of "A miracle, a miracle!" Three days the body was left thus exposed, and on the fourth was buried in a leaden coffin.

St. Francis di Girolamo was rather tall of stature, and fair-proportioned; age had silvered his hair, which was originally black. His forehead was broad, his temples indented, his head small, acutely shaped and somewhat bald. His face, which was thin, was dark-complexioned, his eyes black and piercing, overshadowed by thick eyebrows, and his nose inclined to aquiline; his voice, which when he preached was loud and sonorous, was low and soft in conversation. His manners were engaging,

his countenance ever cheerful, and his whole demeanour breathed modesty, sanctity, and devotion.

On the 3rd of July, 1736, leave being obtained, the coffin of our saint was disinterred, and the body was found mouldered into dust, which was carefully collected, deposited in another coffin of wood lined with brass, and translated from the common cemetery to the chapel of Saint Ignatius.

Numerous miracles quickly spread the fame of our saint's holiness throughout Italy. He was scarcely dead when the sagest and the most virtuous individuals gave him the title of saint: and cardinal Orsini, afterwards Benedict XIII, who was singularly devoted to him, preached his panegyric in the cathedral of Benevento. Not long after his decease, the city of Naples, joined by Benevento, Nola, and several others, petitioned the Congregation of Rites, to have him beatified; and the juridical process of his virtues and miracles was drawn up, and sent to Rome by cardinal Pignatelli, in conjunction with the other cardinals, the nobles, and magistrates of the kingdom. But it was in Germany that our saint acquired the most surprising celebrity; and only six years after his death, one of the fathers of the Society published a book, entitled, "An Account of the Miracles by which Father Francis di Girolamo had become celebrated through all Europe, and especially Germany."

Earnest solicitations were addressed from that country to the Society to have his life printed ; and when it appeared (being published first in Germany), 20,000 copies were exhausted in the single city of Cologne. Mary, archduchess of Austria, afterwards queen of Poland, was indebted to our saint for a signal miracle, as she herself attests, in a document sent from Dresden, dated 20th of July, 1721. The elector of Mayentz also testified his gratitude for favours received, by a votive offering of a gold heart. Moved likewise by zeal and gratitude, the elector of Cologne petitioned the pope to have a juridical investigation of the miracles of our saint instituted. His petition is dated from Munster, in Westphalia, 30th January, 1723, and in 1728, the emperor Charles VI, afterwards king of Spain, the elector of Bavaria, and other potentates, joined in urging the holy see to advance our saint to public honours. After the requisite preliminaries, therefore, a decree, declaring his heroic virtues was published by Benedict XIII, on the 2nd of May, 1758. His miracles were approved by another, of Pius VII, dated the 9th of February, 1806, and finally the definitive decree of his beatification was issued by the same pontiff, on the first of St. Joseph in the same year.

Of the three miracles of which an account is here subjoined, the first was mentioned with par-

ticular eulogium in these decrees, and the other two were selected to be approved for the beatification. Donna Teresa, daughter of Don Adrian, Duke of Lauria, and Donna Elena Guevarra, a child in her tenth year, suffered from a malady, brought on by the reabsorption into the system of the purulent matter of the small-pox. It first commenced by a profuse watering of the eyes, which at last became so weak that they could not endure the light. Once only in the twenty-four hours was she able to open her mouth, either to speak or to take food; and the greatest precaution had then to be used, for if a ray of the sun's light entered the room her teeth became instantly rigidly fixed. The most eminent physicians gave her up as incurable. More than once her mother had besought our saint, while yet alive, to exercise his charity in her behalf, and shortly before his death he assured her that her daughter would recover. When, therefore, the news of his decease reached her, together with the report of the miracles wrought by his sacred remains, she hastened with her daughter to the church, and had her lifted up to the bier that she might touch the hand of the holy man. The first announcement of the happy result was the child's speaking and asking to be let down. With delight her mother saw her able to walk with ease, her poor shrunk



limbs and emaciated frame swelled to their proper proportions; and when she arrived home and sat down to table, partaking of food and conversing without the slightest sign of inconvenience, the reality of her miraculous cure was apparent to all. She afterwards embraced a religious state, and lived to a good old age, without ever experiencing a return of her malady.

One of the congregation of the mission, John Ambroselli, a physician by profession, persisted in a determination to return home, in spite of the contrary advice of our saint, who warned him that a danger awaited him. Not many months after, leaving a sick person's house in the evening, he received the contents of an arquebuss in the right arm, and fell to the ground, when he was picked up and carried home. The surgeon pronounced the wound perilous in the extreme. Indeed, the bones, muscles, and flesh of the arm and hand, were shattered and crushed in a shocking manner, so as to present somewhat the appearance of a nut which has been bruised by a hammer. To save his life, amputation was declared necessary, but this the wounded man would not consent to undergo, and at last resolved to recommend himself to Father Francis, remembering that he had predicted the misfortune. Before long he beheld in his sleep the saint in his usual attire, who, touching his

arm, enjoined him to say an *Our Father*, a *Hail Mary*, and a *Glory be to the Father*, three times every day, and vanished. He awoke instantly and felt no longer any pain in his arm, nor perceived a vestige of the wound. Proclaiming the miracle wherever he went, he lost no time in setting out for Naples to thank his benefactor, whom he expected to find living; and travelling on foot day and night, a distance of fifty miles, arrived in time to learn the recent death of the holy man, and to pour out the tribute of his grateful heart upon his tomb.

Sister Mary Angela Rispoli was seized with epileptic fits, and at last suffered a stroke of apoplexy that deprived her of sense and motion. By dint of vigorous remedies she recovered speech and sensation, but the whole left side of her body was paralysed, and she lay bed-ridden and disabled. Procuring a relic of our saint, she got the infirmarian to apply it to her side, and in the night, during sleep, was cheered up by a vision of the holy man, who touched the part affected, and disappeared. Next morning she awoke perfectly well, arose, dressed herself, and went down into the church, and found the rest of the nuns praying before the Blessed Sacrament, as it was the festival of Corpus Christi. Her unexpected appearance struck terror into them all; but when they beheld

her restored to health, they burst into tears of joy, and, ordering the bells to be rung, joined heart and voice in a canticle of praise and jubilee, singing the *Te Deum* in acknowledgment of the miraculous favour.

## ST. JOHN JOSEPH OF THE CROSS.

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1654—1734.

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HE alone is a perfect Christian who is crucified to the world, and to whom the world is crucified, and who glorieth in nothing save the cross of our Lord Jesus. Nor without embracing the cross at least in heart and affection, can any one belong to the religion of Christ. Upon entering life we are marked with the cross ; through the various vicissitudes thereof our every step is encountered by it—go whithersoever thou wilt and thou shalt find it impossible to escape the cross—and it accompanies us even unto death and the grave. For a Christian dieth pressing the cross to his lips ; and the cross is engraven upon his tomb that it may bear witness of his faith and hope. But if Our Lord has said, in general terms, “whosoever will be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me ;” and if it be true that through many tribulations it is necessary to enter into the kingdom of

heaven, then are all without exception called upon to assume this burthen. Wherefore the minds of men had to undergo a complete change; and the cross, whereof the very name excited the heathen's horror, was to become, through Him who died thereon, the glory of the Christian. Washed by his precious blood, the stained wood became pure and bright;—watered by the saving stream that flowed on Calvary, the accursed tree bore fruits of benediction. And after the exaltation of the cross was proclaimed by the victory of Constantine, the very image and sign became glorious. It adorned the kingly crown and knightly armour; waved on the banner and led the soldier to battle; shone over temples, and upon altars; met the eye in streets, in public squares, on roads and mountains, and was found even in the depths and solitudes of the forest. And as men did not blush to bear the sign of the cross, neither did they hesitate to embrace its doctrines, but, on the contrary, many felt exceeding pride and joy at being accounted worthy of bearing the cross for Jesus' sake; and unto some there hath been dealt out an abundant measure of its ineffable sweetness, wherein they have experienced what He declared, saying, that "His yoke was sweet indeed, and His burthen light." What wonder, therefore, if the saints have always cherished the cross, have chosen sufferings by preference, and longed for tribulations? What mar-

vel if God hath sometimes rewarded the generous cravings of His servants by establishing an outward testimony and memorial, on their bodies, of their inward desires,—as in the stigmata of the seraphic St. Francis and his spiritual daughter St. Veronica? Nor is it strange that saints should have delighted to blend their names with the cross wherewith their hearts were so closely entwined; or that men, after their departure to glory, should have designated them by the title of that whereof they were so deeply enamoured. Accordingly, there have been found holy persons whose entire life hath been a constant endurance of the cross,—a type of that Christian perfection which ordinarily is attained only occasionally under certain circumstances, and for a time; but hath in them continued from their first to their latest breath. Oftentimes their lives pass undistinguished by rare or extraordinary events, and yet win greater admiration by their modest and even tenour, than those which are illustrated by stirring deeds and magnificent achievements.

Even as the landscape, concealed within a wood, and sheltered from general observation, doth to the curious eye discover a calm beauty that enchants the soul; and the limpid waters stealing along the verdant margin of an enamelled plain, upon which the sunshine descends, attempered and softened through the foliage of embowering trees,

with their leaves glistening in a chequered light, and branches balancing with the slightest breath of air towards the slope of some gentle acclivity,—yield to the mind a fresher sense of nature's charms, and a livelier relish of her beauty, than do the bolder, wilder, and more striking outlines of other objects,—such as the lofty mountains, the foaming torrent, or the majestic forest,—so do such unpretending lives yield a spiritual repast, more healthful and beneficial than histories full of interest and crowded with incident. Their excellence and claim to consideration will not be measured by the multitude or greatness of their events, but rather by the order, harmony, and oneness of design therein conspicuous; and in gathering fruit therefrom, it will encourage us to observe, that what is proposed to our admiration is not above our imitation, while the extraordinary graces with which they have been rewarded, are neither beyond the compass of reasonable hope, nor of God's gracious dispensations.

Of the character we have attempted to delineate are the virtues and history of JOHN JOSEPH OF THE CROSS, the saint who is the subject of the present narrative.

He was born on the Feast of the Assumption, in the year of our Lord 1654, at the town of Ischia, in the island of that name, belonging to the kingdom of Naples, of respectable parents, Joseph Calosirto and Laura Garguilo, and was upon the same

day christened Charles Cajetan. Distinguished for piety above all his brethren, no less than five of whom dedicated themselves peculiarly to God's service, he early discovered the seeds of those virtues that in a special manner enriched his soul, and sanctified his life in the religious state,—humility, sweetness, obedience, and an incomparable modesty; and at the same time manifested a marvellous inclination to silence, retirement, and prayer. Wherefore, even in childhood, he made choice of a room in the most secluded quarter of the house, and therein fitting up a little altar to Our blessed Lady, (on whose great festival he had the happiness to be born, and towards whom, through life, he cherished a tender and filial devotion) he spent his whole time in study and pious exercises. Here, too, he early manifested his attachment to the cross, sleeping upon a narrow hard bed, and fasting on appointed days during the week; and as he mortified the flesh betimes, so also he checked all pride, by wearing constantly mean clothes, notwithstanding his birth and station, in despite of remonstrances and reproach. His horror of sin was equal to his love of virtue, so that his mind, from the first dawn of reason, shrunk like a delicate plant from the very shadow of guilt, and was all-imbued with zeal for God's glory. Not only, therefore, did he carefully shun the company of youth of his own age, lest his virtue might be tainted among them, but he sought



every occasion of instilling into others his own hatred and dread of sin, whereof the slightest appearance awakened his indignation and reproof. Idleness, levity, vanity, and falsehood, even in trivial matters, were censured by him as faults severely reprehensible. And when his efforts to check sin drew upon him the hostility of others, he was so far from losing patience, that he therein only discovered a fresh opportunity of practising virtue. Thus, when his charitable interference was once resented in the public street by a blow on the face, he straightway fell upon his knees and prayed for his aggressor. Towards the poor he overflowed with tenderness, reserving for them the choicest portion of his meals, and devoting to their use the pocket-money he received.

The sanctity of his boyhood merited for him the grace of a divine call to a state of holiness; and feeling an interior movement to quit the world, he sedulously sought counsel from the Father of lights, as to the manner in which he should pursue this inspiration. For this end he redoubled his ordinary devotions and mortifications; performed a novena to the Holy Ghost, and threw himself upon the tender patronage and powerful intercession of Our Lady. God hearkened to his fervent appeal; for his providence so disposed that at this period the renowned servant of God, Father John da San Bernardo, a Spanish Alcantarine, came into the

country of our saint, with the view of establishing his order in the kingdom of Naples. The mean habit and devout demeanour of this holy man and his companions, touched and won the heart of our saint; he desired to imitate what he beheld, and doubted not but the desire came from God. Wherefore he journeyed to Naples, that he might impart to the fathers of the order his inclination; and they, having prudently considered his vocation, admitted him to the noviciate. He manifested so much ardour, that the superiors deemed it fitting to clothe him with the habit before the usual time had expired. This happy consummation of his wishes took place before he had completed his sixteenth year. He adopted the name of John Joseph of the Cross, and on the feast of St. John the Baptist, in the year of Our Redeemer 1671, he completed his edifying noviciate, and took the solemn vows of his order; whose holy founders, St. Francis of Asisi, and St. Peter of Alcantara, he proposed to himself as models.

He prolonged, however, the exercises of his noviciate, and especially continued to practise an extraordinary mortification for three years; at the expiration of which term his superiors sent him to superintend the erection of a convent at Piedimonte di Afile. Thus was our saint engaged in the same functions which St. Peter of Alcantara had discharged at the same age; building in Pe-

droso in Estremadura a convent, on the model of which, this, the first belonging to the order raised in the kingdom of Naples, was now erected. Besides giving to his convent a mean exterior and suitable narrowness of dimensions, John Joseph provided for the rigorous and perfect observance of the rule. A greater silence and retirement, a more exact compliance with the prescribed ordinances, an addition of farther time to the two hours and a half allotted to mental prayer, and a more attentive and solemn recitation of the divine office, were the fruits of his zeal. Nor, in forwarding the work in which he was employed, did he stick at performing the lowest and most laborious services, carrying often upon his shoulders bricks and mortar to the builders. The zeal of our saint did not pass unrewarded: it was on this occasion that he first experienced those extacies and raptures with which he was thenceforward so eminently favoured. One day, being searched for in vain through the convent, he was at length discovered in the chapel, raised up in an extacy, so high from the ground that his head touched the ceiling.

For obedience' sake our saint submitted to receive the dignity of the priesthood, and was appointed to hear confessions: in which task he displayed a profound theological learning, which he had acquired solely at the foot of the cross. It is related of St. Bonaventure that St. Thomas Aquinas

came to visit him, and having requested him to point out the books he used in his studies, St. Bonaventure led him into his cell and showed him an oratory and a crucifix: "There," said he, "are my books. There is the principal book from which I would draw all that I would teach and write. It is at the foot of the cross; it is in hearing mass, that I have made what progress I have in science."\* From this fruitful source, also, the Angelic Doctor himself drew those miracles of wisdom that have astonished mankind; hence, too, St. Teresa, untaught by human arts, derived her deep spiritual knowledge and persuasive eloquence; at the foot of the cross, likewise, the learned doctors, Sanchez and Suarez, wrote their profound treatises; and this never-failing, inexhaustible fountain, must be visited by all who would drink the waters of true wisdom, or impart to others enlightened and attractive doctrine. But, carried onward by an ardent love of the cross, whose treasures he more and more discovered as he advanced in the dignity and functions of the sacred ministry, he resolved to establish in the wood adjoining his convent a kind of solitude, where, after the manner of the ancient Fathers of the Desert, he might devote himself entirely to prayer and penitential austerities, and give to the Church an illustrious and profitable example of the sacerdotal spirit exercised in a perfect de-

\* Chronic. S. Franc. i. ii. 2.

gree. God blessed the holy undertaking with exceeding fruit, and turned in its favour the hearts of all near and afar off. There was found in the wood a pleasant fountain, whose waters healed the sick; and hard by he erected a little church, and round about, at intervals, five small hermitages, wherein, with his companions, he renewed the austere and exalted life of the old anchorites, and advanced greatly in spirituality. And in order that no care or worldly thought might ruffle the sublime tranquillity of this contemplative life, the convent had charge of daily supplying the holy solitary with food.

But the superiors, who knew the rich treasure they possessed in our saint, when he had attained the age of twenty-four, chose him for master of the novices; in which new office, so far from allowing himself the smallest dispensation, he was foremost in setting the example of a scrupulous observance of every rule; assiduous in his attendance in choir, constant in silence, in prayer, and recollection. He was careful to instil into the hearts of those under his charge an ardent love of Our Lord Jesus, and a desire of exactly imitating Him, and moreover a special veneration and tender attachment to Our Lady, His mother. Zealous, but mild, without violence or caprice, a vigilant, but not a troublesome and intrusive, monitor, he watched, but did not importune; discreet, gentle, equable, he scrupulously

tinized and detected faults only to heal them with tenderness, and allured to virtue much more by the silent eloquence of his edifying deportment than by reproofs or unseasonable admonitions. From Naples, where he was employed as master of the novices, our saint was transferred to Piedimonte, and invested with the office of guardian. The zeal which this new and more responsible charge called for was surpassed only by the profound humility its exercise demanded. Ever a rigid enforcer of the rule, he was careful to make his enactments palatable to others, by being the first to observe them himself; imitating the chief, who encourages his soldiers by braving dangers and surmounting obstacles, or the parent-bird, that, teaching its young to venture aloft and dare the skies, measures the distance first herself, and stimulates their inexperienced flight. The beneficial result of such conduct was soon made manifest, for he thereby won the hearts of all the religious, who under him advanced with rapid strides towards the most heroic perfection. Still his humble and gentle spirit sighed to be disburthened of so heavy a charge, and having, after two years, obtained the desired release, turned its charitable energies to the direction of souls, the assistance and alleviation of the dying and distressed, and the conversion of sinners.

But while his ardent charity hoped to consume the remaining portion of his life in these duties,

free from the cares and embarrassments of office, to his dismay, he was re-elected guardian by the Provincial Chapter of 1684. And now the cross, which God was thus pleased to send him, became yet more fearful and bitter, by the darkness, dryness, and desolation, wherewith, for a season, his soul was visited; a lively apprehension affecting him that he was utterly unable to discharge his duty, inasmuch as he conceived himself upon the very brink of the abyss. At length, the Lord vouchsafed to dispel the clouds that overshadowed, and still the troubled waters that agitated, his mind, restoring light and tranquillity by a consoling vision. For the saint seemed to behold the soul of a brother lately departed, who quelled his alarm by the comfortable assurance, that of the Alcantarines who came to Naples or were professed there, so holy had been the conduct, that not even one had perished. Wherefore he took heart to assume the duties his office imposed. And the Lord, who had carried his servant thus happily through the ordeal he had sent him for his greater good, like an indulgent and merciful father, rewarded the merit he therein acquired by glorifying him in a remarkable manner. For during his administration, supernatural succours relieved the distresses to which the convent was occasionally reduced; insomuch that in a season of famine, all the bread being distributed to the poor, and none remaining at meal-time for

the use of the community, at that very moment, some unknown person brought and delivered at the convent door just so many loaves as corresponded with the number of the community, which marvellous circumstance was repeated on two similar occasions. Even so the bread more than once was found to multiply miraculously, and the wine, which had turned sour became sweet; and the self-same herbs, which one day had been gathered for the use of the poor, were renewed on the following morning and had sprung up with greater abundance.

When he was again released from his post of guardian, it was only to reassume that of master of the novices, which he held for four successive years, and exercised partly in Naples and partly in Piedimonte. But now succeeded the accustomed visitation of crosses, to be afterwards followed by an increase of grace and supernatural favours; an alternation which chequered the whole course of his life. And first he was summoned to his native country, Ischia, in order to discharge the painful duty of filial affection, and receive the last sighs of his dying mother. He came, and his arrival was the signal for a throng to collect around him to welcome him, and a report of jubilee to go abroad, announcing that the saint was come. He was escorted to his dying parent; in whom, at sight of him, the energies of life rallied



round its expiring flame, which now burnt cheerily in the socket to the last. She would not suffer him to deprive her for a moment of his dear company, feasting her maternal eyes, while Death yet waived his dominion over them, upon the holy fruit of her womb, and never ceased recommending herself to his prayers. Her death ensued, full of hope, and calm, in the presence of her beloved; and, stifling the swelling emotions of sensible grief, this incomparable son followed her remains to the church, and offered up for her soul the sacrifice of propitiation. Who shall adequately conceive his feelings during the celebration of that mass? how the tide of grief would break in upon the current of solemn ideas with which he was then possessed? or how his mind's eye beheld the matron's supplicating figure, catching the holy accents as they fell from his lips; her countenance brightening as the sacred mysteries advanced, and haply at the close, her grateful spirit ascending to the seats of bliss: there to exercise the privileges of heaven first in his behalf, by imploring a boon for her son and deliverer. Was his grief less filial, less poignant, because it was reasonable and Christian? and because, instead of breaking into wild laments and barren demonstrations, it remained pent up in the recesses of his strong heart, and left free play and exercise to calm judgment and the salutary measures of Christian charity? Of a surety no

other than the religion of Jesus can pluck the sting from death, which wounds the victims not more cruelly than the survivors. For if it were pain to die, because of the everlasting separation from all that we love, not less acute were the pain of witnessing such a death; when we should behold, in our calm and sober senses, fully alive to the greatness of such a deprivation, a beloved object irretrievably torn from us, and suffering under the most grievous calamity. But what is death to a Christian, save the boundary beyond which a blessed company is expecting his arrival, and over which it is decreed that all the living shall in turn pass? The charitable offices of either party assist and lighten the passage, rendering it more smooth and pleasant: the saints by their intercession with the Father of mercies in behalf of their departing brother, his living friends by their recommendation of the dying Christian to his God and Judge, and their performance of all those duties which are dictated by natural affection and charitable piety. The cross is presented to the dying man to kiss, the saints are invoked to succour him, prayers are poured forth incessantly, and the moment of his departure is anxiously watched for,—not that the current of natural and holy and wholesome thoughts should be rudely and abruptly checked; but that they may be diverted into a proper channel, according as it shall be fitting either to solicit alleviation of

suffering, a happy deliverance, and future mercy, or to contemplate the awful terrors of God's tribunal, to hope that the decree may be favourable, to throw in the last most earnest appeal; and should there remain a debt to cancel before his admission to happiness, which is to be finally his, to shorten, if possible, the term of his suffering, and open to him speedily the gates of bliss, through the infinite merits of our Lord's bitter passion. Hence Christian fortitude requires that we should bear up against the stroke of death not despondingly, because inevitable, but firmly and cheerfully, because it is the season of better hope, whereby we plant the ensign of salvation upon the grave. This will be no unnatural check to those emotions, which it is so great and yet so painful a consolation to indulge. They will flow no less freely, and far more profitably, when the calls of religion have first been satisfied. Was St. Bernard a violator of the sentiments of humanity, when he followed with tearless eyes and calm countenance the body of his brother to the grave, assisting at all the offices of religion, and officiating thereat himself? Was that great heart insensible, when its uncontrollable grief burst out in the midst of a discourse on other topics, into an impassioned address to his departed brother, and a magnificent tribute to the virtues of this partner of his soul and affections? Or does not such an instance of

Christian fortitude and magnanimity favourably contrast with the pusillanimous and almost heathen despondency and desolation which overwhelm many at the sight or news of death, even as the Catholic faith,—warm, generous, and confident,—cheers beyond that cold and gloomy creed that bids farewell to hope at the brink of the grave?

That fortitude and magnanimity were displayed by our saint, and were shortly afterwards called into action in another manner, upon the recurrence of that spiritual dryness and desolation which has been already noticed. His spiritual enemy now threw another element of bitterness and trial into the cup of tribulation. This was an apprehension that the glory of God was nowise forwarded by the austerities he practised himself, or recommended to those he directed, but rather that they were prompted by an illusive spirit. Again was this probationer of grace relieved, as formerly, by a vision; in which a novice that had died, appeared before him invested with heavenly splendour; and expressly assuring him that he owed this glory entirely to his guidance, at last restored calm to his heart. In the Provincial Chapter of 1690, he was appointed to the office of Definitor, in addition to that which he already held. The difficulties of these two functions, requiring an union of the virtues of the active and contemplative life, our saint marvellously and happily surmounted. Being

at length entirely restored to that private condition which he so much cherished, he had full leisure and scope for the exercise of apostolic virtues.

But now an event happened which well nigh extinguished the institute to which he belonged, in Italy, and which gave occasion to an illustrious evidence of his exceeding utility to the order. The Spanish Alcantarines, having some differences with the Italian, procured from the apostolic see their dismemberment from the latter, who, being thus abandoned, recurred to our saint for succour. Suffering himself to be overcome by their entreaties, he undertook the advocacy of their cause with the pontiff, and succeeded, in a congregation held in 1702, in changing the sentiments of the cardinals and bishops, previously disposed to their suppression; so that on the day after the feast of St. Thomas the Apostle, a decree was issued by which the order was established in Italy under the form of a province. A chapter was convoked, in which the arduous task of government was, by the unanimous voice of all, forced upon the humility and repugnance of our saint, who, surmounting incredible hardships and obstacles, had at length the satisfaction of seeing the necessary means provided, and the order firmly established. Before the chapter-general of the order met, he was named definitor by the provincial chapter; but on his remonstrances at being thus so often compelled to assume

offices, in spite of his repugnance, he at length obtained a papal brief, exempting him from all charges, and annulling even his active and passive vote in the chapter. During the course of the year 1722, another brief made over to the Alcantarines the convent of St. Lucy, in Naples, and thither our saint retired, never afterwards to be brought out into the public light which he so much shunned, but left to edify his brethren during the remainder of his life, and to build up the fabric of those extraordinary virtues, of which we shall now proceed to give a sketch.

Faith, like the keystone of the arch, is that which gives the fabric of Christian virtue solidity and stability. For, without faith, we can have no assurance, either that our sanctity is based upon a proper motive, without which it can be of no avail, or that it will maintain its ground against assaults. Of the attachment of our saint to this necessary virtue, it would be superfluous to say anything, as his whole life was a speaking evidence of that attachment, as well as of the eminent degree in which it pleased God to enable him to appreciate and to feel its consoling mysteries. But he was content to thank God for having admitted him to the truth without rashly or profanely lifting the veil of the sanctuary, and scrutinizing that which is within. He was indeed persuaded that the attempt to fathom the secrets of God, or to mea-

sure his designs, would prove as hopeless as it would be impious, and therefore he bowed to the truths of faith with implicit submission. To one who petulantly murmured against Providence, he once exclaimed, with impressive and energetic vivacity, placing at the same time his hand upon his forehead, "What can three inches of bone comprehend of the unsearchable designs of God?"

From this attachment of our saint to the virtue of faith, proceeded his zeal to instruct the ignorant in the mysteries of religion, as well as the force, fervour, and prodigious clearness, with which he expounded the sublime dogmas of the Trinity and Incarnation, and even of predestination and grace; the gift he possessed of reassuring apprehensions, and quieting doubts respecting faith; and finally, that constant exercise of the presence of God which he practised uninterruptedly, and constantly recommended, saying, "Whoso walks always in God's presence, will never commit sin, but will preserve his innocence and become a great saint."

From this lively sentiment sprung also that perpetual interior recollection, which, neither intercourse with the world, nor the exercise of various duties that brought him in contact with others, could disturb; that constant reference to God of his every thought, word, and action,—his submission and conformity to the Divine will, amidst the numberless crosses wherewith he was visited;—and, in

fine, that warmth of feeling which prompted these, his habitual expressions, "To die for Jesus;—would I were worthy to shed my blood for him! O how ardently I long to pour out my blood in testimony of the holy faith!"

Hope in God rendered our saint of even temper, joyous and gay, in the midst of the various contradictions he experienced in establishing his order in Italy. He used to say to his companions, when they were dismayed by the persecutions they suffered, "Let us hope in God, and doubtless we shall be comforted:" and to the distressed who flocked to him, "God is a tender father, who loves and succours all;" or, "Doubt not, trust in God, He will provide." Hence his heart enjoyed a peace which no sufferings could molest, and which did not desert him even when he lay under the stroke of apoplexy that terminated in his death. For his hope was based upon the Catholic principle, that God, who destined him for an eternal kingdom, would not refuse the succours necessary to attain it. The accomplishment of this destiny he constantly sighed after, and so lived in a sphere of hope and desire, elevated above the world, whose vanities, pleasures, honour, and dignities, he regarded with contempt, or avoided through humility. His language evinced his sentiments. "What is this earth," he would say, "but a clod, a heap of dirt, a mere nothing: paradise, heaven, God is every-



thing. Be not attached to the goods of this world, but fix your affections above; think upon that bliss which endures for ever, while the shadow of this world vanisheth." Still, though his hopes, through the merits of Our Lord's blessed passion, knew no bounds, yet was he tremblingly sensible of the guilt of sin, and the awful character of God's judgments; whence were derived that intense grief with which sin inspired him, and that astonishing humility which led him to bewail unceasingly his want of correspondence to Divine grace, to proclaim himself everywhere a sinner, and implore the prayers of others.

So far was God from being displeased with the confidence of his servant, that he justified and recompensed it by several miracles. A remarkable instance occurred about eight years before his death. In the month of February a Neapolitan merchant tarried for him till evening at the garden gate, and, as he entered, accosted him, beseeching him to pray in behalf of his wife, who lay at that moment in grievous danger, being seized with a violent longing for peaches, which at such a season could not be procured. The saint bade him be of good cheer, for that on the morrow the Lord, St. Peter of Alcantara, and St. Paschal, would satisfy her desire. Then seeing some chestnut boughs as he was mounting the steps, he turned to his companion, "Brother Michael," said he, "take four of these twigs

and plant them; if so be the Lord, St. Peter, and St. Paschal, will have regard to this poor woman's want." Whereupon the lay brother cried out, wondering, "Nay, father, how shall chestnut branches bear peaches?"—"Leave it in the hands of Providence," rejoined the saint, "and of St. Peter of Alcantara." Accordingly, brother Michael obeyed, and set the twigs in a flower-pot outside the saint's window. And lo! in the morning they were covered with green leaves, and each several branch bore a beautiful peach, one whereof was immediately sent to the merchant's wife, who thus marvelously escaped the threatened peril. Many similar miracles God wrought in like manner through his servant.

To complete the crown of theological virtues, charity in both its branches pre-eminently characterized our saint. This divine virtue burned so warmly in his heart, as to be transfused through his features, over which it spread a superhuman and celestial glow, and gave to his discourse a melting tenderness. "Were there neither heaven nor hell," he would say, "still would I ever wish to love God, who is a father so deserving of our love." Or, "Let us love our Lord, love him verily and indeed, for the love of God is a great treasure. Blessed is he that loveth God."

Such was the zeal for God's glory that inflamed our saint, that he would readily have consumed therewith

the whole world. His discourse was ever directed to promote the love of God, and to vanquish self-love. Wherever he discovered souls with happy dispositions for virtue, he used incredible pains in bringing these seeds to maturity. From this zeal also proceeded his alarm at the least shadow of guilt. But, for his conformity to the Divine will, his surrender of all his wishes and inclinations to God, our saint was most remarkable. At an early age this virtue was developed in him; and, during his monastic life, enabled him to preserve a serene and joyful countenance amidst excruciating pains, or under bitter tribulations and crosses. He blessed God for them all. Among the many sicknesses he had, was one which lasted twenty-three days, during which he was obliged to remain with his head leaning on a pillow, and his arms motionless; yet, such was the power of this virtue in him, that not a murmur or complaint ever passed his lips; but to all who came to visit him, he cheerfully and patiently replied; so that he was called "the Job of latter times, a man divested of every human frailty."

Our saint, who so ardently loved God, whom he saw not, was not without bowels of tenderness for his neighbour, whom he beheld. It was the constant practice of his life to feed the poor; and when he was superior, he ordered that no beggar should be dismissed from the convent gate without relief.

in time of scarcity he devoted to their necessities his own portion, and even that of the community, relying upon Providence to supply their wants; and when he was only a private monk, he earnestly recommended this charity to the superiors. But by his humane and adroit interference, he procured the payment of debts due to poor artisans and merchants, who were wont to recur to him for this purpose.

But it was towards the sick that his charity displayed its immeasurable benignity. Thus he was seen attending the infirm in his convent with an unwearied assiduity; nor was he less anxious to serve those who were without, but generously sought them out, and visited them, even during the most inclement seasons. His charity even went so far that he prayed God to transfer the sufferings of others to himself. And such was the force of his charity, that the petition was not unfrequently heard. Thus, when Father Michael, afterwards Archbishop of Cosenza, was suffering from two ulcers in his legs, which required a painful incision, he recommended himself to the prayers of our saint; who, generously begging of God to transfer to him the affliction, forthwith the sick man's limbs became sound, and the saint's were infected with two malignant ulcers, which caused him to suffer excruciating pain. And as God maketh his sun to shine upon the evil as well as the good, so our saint would

not exclude even his enemies from the boundless range of his charity. For one that had insulted him he once laboured strenuously to procure some advantageous post; and being warned that the man was his enemy, he replied, "that therefore he was under the greater obligation of serving him." Still greater was his ardour in performing the spiritual works of mercy. When recommended in his old age to spare himself, on account of his infirmities, "I have no infirmity," said he, "that should prevent my labouring, even though I should sacrifice my life for the same cause for which our Lord Jesus was crucified." Wherefore God wrought through his ministry many conversions. The same spirit of charity which caused him to take upon himself the sicknesses of others, made him likewise assume their spiritual burthens. A certain domestic of a prince lived for five years without the sacraments, and plunged recklessly into all manner of guilt. Moved at length by the stings of conscience, he made a general confession to our saint, who, having regard to the sincerity of his sentiments, and compassionating his frailty, enjoined him an easy penance, undertaking to perform the remainder of the satisfaction himself.

Besides these general virtues, he possessed in the highest degree those which belonged to his religious state. And first a prompt and implicit obedience to all commands, however painful or

difficult. Once he had to perform a journey of considerable distance, and set out with alacrity, although his limbs were afflicted with grievous ulcers. When he had arrived at a certain town on the way, he was strongly urged by the physician of the place not to proceed, seeing that his sores were inflamed, and the season was intensely cold. Finding the saint withheld, by his love of obedience, from yielding to these arguments, he offered to write to his superior; but this he resolutely yet politely declined; and forthwith continued his journey. He had not gone far, when slipping on the ice, he fell and cruelly lacerated his wounded limbs, so that he could hardly stand upright; still, with heroic fortitude and perseverance, he prosecuted and accomplished his task.

That obedience which he practised himself, he was careful to enforce upon others, when his office of superior made it his duty, for he justly regarded this virtue as essential to a religious. Thus, when he discovered, by a supernatural light, a secret transgression of one of the novices against this precept, he visited the fault with instant severity, stripping the delinquent of his habit. Neither was his love of poverty less remarkable. A rough seat and a table, a bed, consisting of two narrow planks, with two sheep-skins and a wretched wool-len coverlet, a stool to rest his wounded legs upon, —these, with his breviary, formed the whole fur-

niture of his cell. And although the order allowed each one to possess two habits, yet during the forty-six years that he was a member of it, he never had any other than that which he put on in the noviciate. However, it was in his vigilant guard over chastity, that our saint was most singular. His unremitting mortifications, his extreme modesty, and perpetual watchfulness over all his senses, preserved him from the slightest breath of contamination. Never during the sixty years of his life was he known to look any one not of his own sex in the face. His every word and action bespoke purity and inspired the love thereof. In the streets, he returned the salutations of all he met, politely, but without raising his eyes from the ground, and he never conversed with females without necessity, and without observing the greatest reserve. Going into a convent of nuns, he would constantly be attended by a companion; and while he remained there, made so little use of his eyes, that he could give no account of anything it contained, even of such objects as had been pointed out to his observation. With the members of his order, he did not think proper to depart from this singular modesty of deportment, conversing with them at a distance and with eyes bent downwards. To accustom the novices to this restraint of the senses, he would even prohibit them from lifting their eyes to the sacred images. So habitual and so

jealous was his love of this virtue, that on his death-bed, when one of the brothers raised the covering from his limbs, in order to dress the ulcers upon his legs, the dying saint made an effort to draw it down again. In reward for this virginal purity, which he preserved unspotted from his baptism, as his confessor afterwards attested, God caused his person, in spite of his age, infirmities, and constant sores, to diffuse a sweet and delicious perfume, that was perceived by all around him. The same is recorded of St. Pacificus, whose life is contained in this book. Our saint, so solidly grounded in this virtue, was not without its only sure foundation,—humility. He delighted in performing menial offices in the convent, and when the task allotted to him was finished, he was anxious to fulfil that of others. The same virtue made him dexterously conceal his extraordinary mortifications. Living for a long time on nothing but a little bread and fruit, he used to observe, smiling, that he was greedy of fruit, and indulged himself. Hence he also avoided all posts and honour, as much as was consistent with his vow of obedience. When he journeyed through Italy as provincial, he would not make himself known at the inns, where he lodged, lest any distinction should be paid him. To the same cause may be ascribed his unwillingness to revisit his native country, his aversion to being in company with the great, when

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their spiritual affairs did not require it; his not accepting the invitations of the viceroy and his consort to the palace; his calling himself, as he was wont, the greatest sinner in the whole world, ungrateful to God for his benefits, a worm on the face of the earth; his custom of frequently kissing the hands of priests; his unwillingness to declare his opinion in council; his care to break off every discourse touching upon his birth or connexions; his thanking God for enlightening those who disparaged him; his never being scandalized at the sins of others, how great soever; and finally, his never evincing the smallest resentment at any insult or injury. He was studious to conceal and dissemble the great gifts of miracles and prophecy with which God favoured him; ascribing the miracles he performed to the faith of those in whose behalf they were wrought, or to the intercession of the saints. Not unfrequently he desired those whom he restored to health, to take some certain medicine, that the cure might be attributed to a mere natural remedy. With regard to his prophecies, which were numerous, he affected to judge from analogy and experience. Thus, during the tremendous earthquake, which took place on St. Andrew's day, in 1732, when the nuns of several convents were afraid to venture to their dormitories, he reassured them, saying, that after a few shocks, it would cease, without damaging the city or its inhabitants. And

when asked on what ground he spoke so positively, "I am sure it will be so," said he, "because it has happened so before." The event, however, fell out as he had predicted; and the day before the earthquake occurred, he took this method of forewarning his companions: "My brethren," said he, "if an earthquake were to happen, what place would afford a sure refuge?" None answering; "the Refectory," he added, "being deep-seated in the mountain."

We come now to speak of his extraordinary mortifications. To the numerous penitential austerities enjoined by his order, he added as many more as an ingenious self-denial could devise. He guarded his senses most particularly; even in his youth he would not permit himself the liberty of lifting his eyes to the roof of his cell; and when he was a priest, he made it a rule to look no one whomsoever in the face. His ears he mortified by denying them the gratification of music. He would not even smell a flower.

Silent as long as possible, when he spoke, it was in a low voice. Bare-headed in all seasons, he wore under his rough and heavy habit divers hair-shirts and chains, which he was careful to vary to keep the sense of torment ever fresh. Besides, he used the discipline to a severe degree; and, when at the age of forty, his superiors obliged him to wear sandals, he placed between them and his feet a quantity of small nails; but the most tremendous

instrument of torture, which he devised against himself, was a cross about a foot in length, set with rows of sharp nails, which he fastened tight over his shoulders, so as to open there a wound which never afterwards closed. Another similar, but smaller, cross he wore attached to his breast. But his abridgment of sleep was truly wonderful, and he never took it, save seated on the ground, or cramped up on his little bed, often with his head leaning against a piece of wood jutting from the wall. No less singular was his abstinence. For the last thirty years of his life, he entirely overcame that most insatiable of wants, thirst, absolutely abstaining not merely from wine and water, but from every liquid whatsoever. When his confessor asked him once how he had succeeded in mastering so fierce a craving of nature, he replied, that it had cost him an awful conflict; however, the reflexion on the sufferings which men voluntarily sustain for unworthy motives, carried him through with perseverance. In sooth, these things would appear incredible, did we not remember that St. John Joseph of the Cross had taken up the instrument of our Lord Jesus's blessed passion, and was miraculously supported under its weight. If we are not blessed with equal strength, still we are all capable of enduring much more than is demanded of us for gaining heaven.

When St. Ignatius had recovered from his

wound, and found that the leg, which had been broken, was now shorter than the other, so that his figure was deformed, he had the limb every day stretched upon a rack, in the vain hope of lengthening it. The pain which he endured for a miserable vanity, others have undergone for the vanity of honour, and to be considered stoics; conversing, with composure, and with unmoved muscles, even while their limbs were being amputated. Nay, who will hesitate to face the fatigue and privations of a long journey, for the sake of satisfying curiosity or affection? Is not the life of a worldling more irksome and more painful than that of a mortified religious man? How many heart-burnings, and aching heads, and palled appetites, and disordered faculties, and diseased frames, could bear out this assertion, — that the way to heaven would be easy on the score of mortification, if men could consent to sacrifice to virtue but one half what they sacrifice to feed their passions?

It was usual for our saint to be absorbed and rapt in heavenly ecstasies and visions. In this state he was lost to all that passed around him; seeing, hearing, and feeling nothing, he stood like a statue of marble, and when he was awakened, his countenance glowed like a burning coal. In a condition so closely resembling that of the blessed, he was, from time to time, made a partaker of their glories. Thus, during prayer a halo of light

often encircled his head; and, during mass, a supernatural brightness overspread his countenance. He was known to declare, in a moment of transport, that Our blessed Lady had appeared to him, and had spoken with him. And on Christmas night, and other times besides, the infant Jesus descended into his arms, prolonging his stay for several hours. His frequent ravishments from the earth, and suspension in the air, was a well-known occurrence, visible to many who beheld him at mass, and, in a remarkable manner, happened during a procession.

Nor was that singular prerogative denied him, which God's saints have sometimes possessed, of appearing in two places at once, or of passing with the velocity of blessed spirits from one to another. It is upon record that when he lay grievously ill in his cell, a lady sent to require his attendance on her, below, in the Church. "You see how I am situated," said the saint to the messenger; "I am without power to move." But when the servant brought back this answer to his lady, who, while he was away, had been conversing with the saint, she refused to believe his account, till she had ascertained that the saint was really in the condition he described. Francesco Viveros, a servant of a certain duchess, came to beg the saint to accompany him to see his lady; and finding him utterly incapable of moving, hastened to repeat this cir-

cumstance to the duchess, by whose bedside he found the saint administering consolation to her. Nothing could exceed his astonishment thereat, and he expressed it in a lively manner. Wherefore the saint, with an unembarrassed air, said : “ How simple you are. I passed close to you and yet you did not see me.” Thus also the lady Artemisia, mother to the Marchioness of Rugiano, being seized with her accustomed frightful sufferings, and having no means of bringing our saint to her aid, broke out into this mournful exclamation : “ O Father John Joseph, not only art thou away in this my distress, but I have no one to do me the charitable office of bringing thee hither.” When straightway he appeared, while she was yet speaking, and said to her with his usual kind air, “ It is nothing, it is nothing ;” blessed her, cured her, and vanished in the same moment.

Neither were the secrets of hearts hidden from him. Thus he imparted to a brother of his order his knowledge of his secret desire to go into an infidel country to suffer martyrdom. Another time, being introduced to a lady whom he had never before seen, “ Ah this,” said he, “ is the lady who suffers so much from her husband’s ill-usage :” then turning to her, saying, “ Why do *you* give him occasion ?” he proceeded to unfold her errors in this particular.

We shall now add a few instances of his knowledge of distant or future events. He predicted

the recovery of a lady, who was given over by her physicians, and who accordingly was restored to health. His prayers were begged for a nun, who lay grievously sick; "Do not be afraid," said he, "she will do well," and so it happened. On the contrary, he foretold the death of many, who were not expected to die. Being called upon to attend a nun who was expiring, he observed by her bed-side a young lady, her niece. "You have brought me hither," said he, "to witness the death of the aunt, who will still live; whereas it is the niece who is on the brink of eternity." And shortly after, the nun was restored to perfect health, and the maiden was carried off suddenly by a stroke of apoplexy. But a very remarkable example of his prophetic veracity occurred in the case of three young men, to whom in his own house at Ischia, he foretold, in 1694, their several destinies. Their names were Gabriel, Antony, and Sabato. They all manifested a desire of entering the Alcantarine order.

When the first-named opened his intention to him, our saint cried out, full of compassion, "Alas! my son, a religious order is not thy vocation, thou hast a gallows-face." When the second consulted him, he said, "Stand upon thy guard, my son, for a grievous peril awaiteth thee." Now the third, who was a simple lout, overhearing what had already passed, answered the saint's interrogatory as to

what he wanted, by saying, "That his parents being dead, knowing no better, he was desirous of joining the other two, who had applied to become monks." "Sabato," said the saint, "pray diligently to Our blessed Lady; go often to your duty, and God will assist you." Following this advice, the honest countryman became a lay-brother among the discalced Franciscans, and was often afterwards met by our saint. He led a holy life, bore the excruciating pains of his last illness with Christian fortitude, and died accounted a great servant of God. But before his death he had an opportunity of witnessing the fulfilment of our saint's two other predictions; for passing in the vicinity of Pozzuoli, a spot was pointed out to him on the mountains adjoining, where Antonio was struck dead and burnt to ashes by a thunderbolt, after he had come into this neighbourhood with a view of marrying and settling. By a strange coincidence, about the same time, he met near the island of Ischia the third person, whose destiny was predicted, Gabriel Martine, armed and equipped like a brigand, who informed him, that having committed a murder, he had been condemned to execution, but escaped from prison during an insurrection, in which the jails were all thrown open, and that he now wandered about a fugitive, in constant apprehension of being pursued for another homicide of which he was guilty.



It remains to speak of the miracles of our saint, which surpass enumeration. First, he possessed a mighty empire over the evil spirits, which he expelled from divers persons. The part of the convent of Saint Lucy of the Mount, called the noviciate, was nightly infested by these wicked spirits, but our saint, by blessing the apartment, effectually dislodged them. Strange to say, after his death they attempted to return, but were driven away by the invocation of his name. Even the elements obeyed him. Rain ceased at his command, when it was falling heavily so as to threaten to oblige him to seek shelter. Another time, journeying with a companion under an incessant shower, when they had reached their destination their garments were dry, as though they had walked under the sun all the way. All nature was obedient and subservient to him. The air bore to him on its wings his stick, which he had left behind ; and the herbs, as we have seen, grew supernaturally to minister to his charity. Sometimes he wrought his miracles by simple prayer, frequently by making the sign of the cross, by the application of sacred relics or images, or of the oil burning before them.

Nor less numerous were the cures effected by contact with things belonging to him, or with his person. A cloak of his delivered a person from a raging madness, judged to be incurable ; the manner of which cure was extraordinary. His mother,

holding up the mantle before him, he leaped from a high window into the street, and when all thought to find him dead and crushed to atoms, he was brought up alive and whole in body and mind, and so remained to the hour of his death. With a piece of the saint's habit, Casimir Avellone cured his wife in London of a spasmodic affection in the shoulders, upon which every remedy had hitherto been tried in vain. By the contact of his person a certain nobleman was delivered from an acute pain in the head; he straightened the limbs of a child three years of age, and restored sight to a youth who had become blind, by the sole application of his hands.

In the practice of every virtue, and in the enjoyment of sublime graces, our saint passed the days of his pilgrimage, glorifying God and giving alms and doing good, until it pleased the Lord to close his career on earth, not without a previous forewarning as to the time and circumstances of his death. In the year when it occurred, his nephew, writing to him from Vienna, that he would return home in May, he sent back answer that he would not then find him living. And only a week before his departure, discoursing with his brother Francis, he said, "I have never asked a boon of you till now; do me the charity to pray to Almighty God for me, next Friday, do you hear? mind, do not forget." It was the very day he died. Two days

before his last mortal attack, accosting Vincent Laines, "we shall never," said he, "meet on earth again." Now, upon the last day of February, after hearing mass, and receiving communion with extraordinary fervour, he betook himself to his room, to deliver to the crowds that resorted to him his last paternal admonitions. He continued without interruption till midday, and at that hour precisely, turning to the lay-brother, that assisted him, said, "shortly a thunder-clap will lay me prostrate on the ground, you will have to raise me thence, but this is the last I shall experience." Accordingly, at two hours and a half after sunset, an apoplectic stroke threw him on the ground. He was alone when it occurred, but a lay-brother entering shortly after, lifted him on to the bed, and as he was performing this service, the saint softly said to him, "I recommend to you that image of the Blessed Virgin," and with a joyful and serene countenance, he lay down with his eyes bent towards the picture of Our Lady. At first the nature of his disease was mistaken. It was thought that over-fatigue had brought on giddiness; but the next day, the symptoms manifested themselves alarmingly, and spread in defiance of remedies. The Theatine fathers, by whom he was tenderly beloved, hearing of his accident, came to visit him, and brought with them their renowned relic, the staff of St. Cajetan. On its application to his head, a remarkable

effect took place, which we shall relate in the words of Father Michael, by whom it was applied. "On account of the mutual friendship," saith he, "subsisting between Father John Joseph of the Cross and myself, as well as my own especial devotion and obligations towards him, I no sooner heard that he had been visited with a stroke of apoplexy, and that his death was expected, than I carried to him the staff of St. Cajetan. As I touched his head therewith, there happened a prodigy, the like of which never came to pass before or since, albeit, the relic is, and has been borne continually unto many sick persons. This was, that on entering the cell of the afore-named servant of God, who was dying, and on applying the afore-named relic to his head, the staff did forthwith give certain leaps and bounds, corresponding to a melodious sound that was audible to all present; nor could I, though I strove ever so, restrain it from quivering in my hands, unto my own and others great wonderment and joy at so unheard-of a prodigy. And at the same moment, wherein this took place, the servant of God was seen to lift his hand slowly, and point with his fore-finger towards heaven. I wondering thereat, and the more, seeing that the saint, by reason of the violence of his distemper, was out of his senses, was for approaching unto him the relic a second time, when lo! the like leaps occurred, and the melodious sound was heard again, and even so,

once more, the servant of God lifted up his hand, and pointed with his fore-finger to heaven, the which I interpreted that St. Cajetan was inviting him to paradise. All this caused in me and those present exceeding comfort and an overflowing of spiritual tenderness; and the rumour of this great miracle suddenly spreading through the convent, drew to the place a multitude of friars, and distinguished persons, and these all joined in beseeching me to apply the relic once more, that they too might witness the prodigy. At first, I was loth, thinking it to be in some sort a tempting of God; but yielding to their importunity, I complied, saying within myself, 'haply God wisheth yet more to glorify his servant.' And drawing forth the relic, whilst the bystanders were watching with devout curiosity for the issue, I twice severally applied the relic, and as often were repeated the leaps and the sound which I have described, and the servant of God did each time lift up his hand, and point to heaven as before; the which now fully confirmed my conviction that this was an invitation of St. Cajetan to heavenly bliss, whereunto the servant of God was answering by this sign. A matter deserving of no small consideration, seeing that the servant of God lay under a stroke of apoplexy, deprived of sense."

So far Father Michael. Yet though he was thus, to all appearances, senseless during the five

days that he survived, doubtless his soul was occupied in interior ecstasies and profound contemplation; as indeed his countenance, his lips, and gestures, expressive of the tenderest devotion, indicated. His eyes, generally shut, opened frequently to rest upon the mild image of Our Lady, whose picture was opposite him. Sometimes, too, he turned them towards his confessor, as if demanding absolution, according to what had been previously concerted between them. A pressure of the eyes and an inclination of the head were also perceptible, and he was seen to strike his breast when he received, for the last time, the sacramental absolution from the hands of the superior. When too his cherished friend, Innocent Valletta, fell upon his knees by his bed-side, and poured out his soul, secretly recommending to the holy man himself and his family, and beseeching him not to forget them when he should be in Paradise, the servant of God cast on him a glance of ineffable sweetness and benevolence, gently squeezing his hand in token that he promised the desired boon. Extreme unction was now given him, in presence, besides his own community, of several persons of distinction, ecclesiastics and laics, who all knelt about the wretched couch of the expiring saint. Now, when, according to the custom observed among the Alcantarines, the father guardian addressed the community, telling them that their

dying brother begged, for charity sake, a poor habit to be buried in, the servant of God bowed his head to signify his assent, and touched the garment of the speaker. Whereat all who were present could not choose but be affected, seeing that this which the humble saint chose was the meanest that could be, having been worn for sixty-four years, and so patched that its original shape or texture was no longer discernible.

At length the morning dawned, the wished-for sun arose, which was to witness the passage of our saint from this vale of tears and land of sorrow to a better life. It was Friday, the 5th of March, a day yet unoccupied in the calendar, as if purposely left for him. He had spent the previous night in unceasing fervent acts of contrition, resignation, love, and gratitude, as his frequent beating of his breast, lifting his hands towards heaven, and blessing himself, testified. Before the morning was far advanced, turning to the lay-brother that attended him, as if awoke out of an ecstasy, he said, "I have but a few moments to live." Hereupon the lay-brother ran in all speed to give notice to the superior, who, with the whole community, at that moment in choir, hastened to the cell of the dying man. The recommendation of a departing soul was recited with an abundance of tears; and so collected was our saint during this awful period, that when brother Bartholomew placed his arm

under his head, having seen him twice make an effort to raise himself, the servant of God waved his hand for him to desist, that his communion with God might not be interrupted. The father-guardian perceiving he was in his agony, imparted to him the last sacramental absolution; which he, bowing his head to receive, instantly raised it again; opened, for the last time, his eyes, now swimming in joy, and inebriated with heavenly delight; fixed them, just as they were closing, with a look of ineffable tenderness, upon the image of Our blessed Lady; and composing his lips to a sweet smile, without farther movement or demonstration, ceased to breathe.

Thus expired, without a struggle or a repugnance even of nature, John Joseph of the Cross, the mirror of religious life, the father of the poor, the comforter of the distressed, and the unconquerable Christian hero: but when death came to pluck him from the tree, he dropped like a ripe fruit, smiling, into his hands; or, even as a gentle stream steals unperceived into the ocean, so calmly that its surface is not fretted with a ripple, his soul glided into eternity. To die upon the field of battle, amidst the shouts of victory, in presence of an admiring throng, surrounded by the badges of honour and respect, bequeathing to history a celebrated name, may merit the ambition of the world; or to perish in some noble cause, buoyed up by en-



thusiasm, conscious worth, and the certainty of having the sympathy and applause of all from whom meed is valuable, may make even selfishness generous, and cowardice heroic: but to suffer during life the lingering martyrdom of the cross; and then to expire, not suddenly, but like a taper, burnt out; to fall like a flower, not in its prime and beauty, but gradually shedding its leaves and perfume, and bearing its fibres to the last, till it droops and lies exhaled and prostrate in the dust; is a death too pure, too self-devoted, too sublime, for any but the annals of Christian heroism to supply. And assuredly a day will come when the conqueror's crown shall not be brighter than the Christian's halo, nor the patriot's laurel-branch bear richer foliage than the palms of Paradise, which the humblest denizen of heaven shall carry. A day will come that will give to all their proper measure and dimensions; yet even before that day shall God glorify those who have died the peaceful death of the just, by embalming their memory and rendering their tombs and relics illustrious, so that, for the one who shall have heard of the hero, thousands shall bless and invoke the saint.

Scarcely had our saint expired, than he began to manifest himself to many in a glorified state. At the very hour of his happy departure, as Diego Pignatelli, Duke of Monte Lione, was walking in his apartment, he beheld Father John Joseph of

the Cross, seemingly in perfect health (though he had left him sick shortly before at Naples) and invested with supernatural splendour. Whereat, being greatly astonished, he exclaimed, "How? are you so suddenly recovered, Father John Joseph?" Whereunto the saint answered, "I am well and in bliss," and then disappeared. The Duke, sending to Naples, learned that he had died at the self-same hour wherein he had gloriously appeared to him. Yet more remarkable was his manifestation to Innocent Valetta; for he, being asleep at the time of our saint's decease, felt himself grasped by the arms, and loudly called by name: whereupon, awaking in exceeding terror, he beheld a cloud of glory, and standing in the midst thereof an aged Alcantarine, whose features, however, he was unable to distinguish, by reason of the multitude of rays that incessantly streamed from them, dazzling his eyes with their overpowering brilliancy. And being asked by the apparition if he knew him, he replied in the negative. Then it said, "I am the soul of Father John Joseph of the Cross, just now released from the flesh, and am on my way to Paradise, where I shall never cease praying for thee and for thy house. If thou wishest to see my body, thou mayest find it in the Infirmary of St. Lucy of the Mount." So saying, he vanished, together with the cloud, leaving him whom he had favoured with the visit dissolved in tears, and melting with

holy tenderness. Clothing himself in all haste, he repaired to St. Lucy, and, meeting a crowd who related to him the news of our saint's death, he amazed them by a recital of what he had witnessed. Then, falling upon the body, he vented his grief in an abundant shower of tears, and returned home inconsolable for his loss : all which he testified thirty years afterwards, when the process for our saint's beatification was being moved. In like manner, three days afterwards, he appeared to Father Buono, of his own community, enjoining him to tell the superior to order the recital of a *Gloria Patri* before the altar of the Holy Sacrament, to return thanks to the Blessed Trinity for the favours conferred on him. Not many days later, the Lady Mary Ann Boulei del Verme was visited by the saint, for whose spiritual succour she was at that moment ardently longing. The Baron Bassano, lying sick of a mortal distemper, was favoured by a similar vision, and healed, so that he survived many years ; and when he died, his death was occasioned by quite another disorder than that with which he was then afflicted. So sending for Father Buono, he told him how the saint had cured him, commanding him to send for the same father, and to seek and abide by his spiritual advice : which he did faithfully.

Besides these proofs, manifested to a few only, there was another more public evidence of our

saint's assumption to glory. For his body, which, considering the season of his death, and the malady by which it was caused, might have been expected to grow stiff almost immediately, remained perfectly flexible, as was seen in a remarkable manner, when, in order to envelop it in the winding-sheet, it was placed in a sitting posture. The countenance was beautiful, and fresh-coloured, though in life he was swarthy, and wore so placid a demeanour, that the saint seemed asleep. Warm and ruddy blood distilled from his wounds, diffusing a fragrant odour, and many, dipping handkerchiefs therein, carried them away as relics. When the body was removed from the church to the sacristy, it seemed rather to support the bearers, than to be borne by them.

Scarcely was the news of the saint's decease spread through Naples, than crowds flocked to see the body ; and, for fear of some indiscreet violence, it was thought proper to station guards round it. All in vain : the people pressed forward through every obstacle, and in a short time every vestige of clothing that covered the body disappeared, being seized with avidity as most precious relics. The bier was torn away by fragments, as well as the pall spread under it ; and three times the body had to be carried into the sacristy to be decently dressed. Crosses and rosaries were brought, that they might

touch his sacred person ; natives and strangers flocked, that they might kiss his feet.

Even before the body was buried, heaven glorified our saint's remains by miracles. Brother Michael of San Pasquale, in checking the indiscreet curiosity and devotion of the crowd, received from the point of a halberd a wound upon the head. The blood which streamed copiously from it, was at once staunched by applying thereto a piece of the saint's habit. Yet more splendid was the miracle wrought in favour of Charles Carofalo. During the obsequies at which he was present, he recommended himself in a moment of fervour to the saint, promising that if he were cured of the falling sickness, with which he had been afflicted for twenty-five years, he would publish the miracle to all the world. At the same instant the sickness left him. But the sequel is yet more extraordinary. Ungratefully neglecting his engagement, after a year he experienced a relapse ; whereupon, throwing himself at the saint's feet, he implored pardon, repaired his fault, and again recovered.

Some hyacinths that had been strewed over the holy corpse cured the daughter of Girolamo Politi of a violent inflammation in the eye ; and, not to speak of innumerable similar events, two small particles of his habit cured Anne di Matia and Paschal Christiano ; the former of an acute pain in

her side, which had withstood every previous remedy, and the latter of a raging colic, which for the space of six years had never left him, but kept him in a constant agony. These favours so excited the eagerness and piety of the people, that all efforts to protect the body from their violence proved ineffectual, so that the superiors found it advisable to accelerate the burial. Wherefore, although it had been previously resolved to leave the remains exposed for three days to public veneration, early the next morning, before the crowd could enter the church, the funeral ceremonies were performed, and the body was piously consigned to the tomb. Nothing can describe the disappointment of the people when the church doors were opened. Nothing could exceed its violence. They flung themselves upon the stone that covered his precious remains, kissing it and watering it with their tears. Margaret di Fraja obtained, on this occasion, the cure of her nephew, who was dying of wounds received in a fall; and on the same day Vincenza Aldava recovered from a contraction of the knee, that disabled her from walking, by merely sitting in the chair that had belonged to our saint, and repeating a *Hail Mary* to Our Lady. And now after his burial, miracles innumerable attested the exalted virtues of our saint. Fevers, spasms, attacks of apoplexy and epilepsy, and divers diseases judged incurable, were healed through his relics. But the

story of Agnello Vicario, whom the saint favoured with several miracles and apparitions, deserves to be noticed at greater length. This man was hewing stones in the orchard belonging to the monastery of St. Lucia, and being sent by the overseer to work in a very perilous part, while he was lifting his axe, beheld the ground giving way beneath him; and invoking, with a loud voice, the saint, whom he had never so much as seen, at the same moment fell a depth of thirty feet, and struck with his face against some sharp-pointed stones which had been cut, while the crumbling mass above descended upon him in huge fragments, and almost entirely buried him; so that naturally he must have been crushed to atoms. At the noise of the fall and of his agonizing cries, some of the brothers hastened to the spot, and, to their astonishment, raised him from the heap of ruins still alive, though senseless, speechless, and bruised in a shocking manner. In order to second the devotion of Agnello, who at the moment of danger had invoked Saint John Joseph of the Cross, the religious, who attended the sick, gave him to drink, on three days successively, a glass of water, wherein were two threads of the holy man's habit. On the third, the poor patient being alone and recovering in some sort the use of his senses, uttered, in secret, these words: "O, Father John Joseph, grant me a speedy death, if I am not permitted to recover to provide

for the maintenance of my family. Alas, shall I ever be able?" Whereupon, he felt that the fractured and wounded parts of his body were being touched and dressed; and thinking it must be by the infirmarian, turned as if towards him, and saw within a bright cloud an old man, of low stature, clad in the habit of a discalced friar, who was performing the charitable office described; who, smiling, said to him: "Fear not; in a week you will be well," and so vanished. Instantly he found himself able to speak and to move his limbs; so that, sitting up in the bed, he called the infirmarian, and related to him what had happened. Wherefore, to discover if it was really Father John Joseph that had appeared to him, the brother shewed him several pictures of saints of the Franciscan order, all which he passed by, till at last seeing the portrait of our saint, his heart gave a mighty bound, and he burst into a flood of tears, that filled the bystanders with joy and tenderness. And he would have the picture hung up over his head, and never ceased thanking and praying to the saint. The next night also, while he lay half asleep, he felt the coverlet drawn over him, and heard a voice say softly to him: "keep yourself warm—don't catch cold;" and, opening his eyes again, expecting to see only the infirmarian, beheld the saint as before, who saying to him—"do you not recognize me?"—reassured him of his cure and disappeared.



At the end of eight days, he was restored to perfect health. On two similar occasions, once at Naples and another time at Caserta, this favoured mortal was miraculously delivered from the jaws of destruction; and, on invoking the saint, found himself carried from beneath a falling mass, that threatened to overwhelm him, and placed in security.

Two years after the occurrence of the miracle we have detailed, Agnello began to be afflicted with an ulcer in the leg, which at last disabled him from working. From this distress also he was delivered by the saint; who on this occasion enjoined him to ask a certain brother of the order, for some of his hair, which had been cut off and preserved since his death. At first the brother evaded the request, but Agnello insisting that he knew that he possessed the relic, and beseeching him for the love of God not to withhold what the saint had desired him to obtain, he complied. In consequence of these, and other authentic miracles, which for brevity we omit, Father John Joseph of the Cross was beatified by Pius VI, on the 24th May, 1789. Since which time, Heaven has continued to speak in favour of his sanctity by the same glorious voice of miracles: whereof the two following were, after a strict previous investigation, selected by our Holy Father, Pius VII. Maria Louisa Romaniello, aged eighteen, a native of the

city of Naples, was afflicted with a tumour within her mouth, which caused her excruciating torture, and prevented her from taking food. One morning, overcome by the intolerable pain, she went to consult Dr. John Grieco, who examined her, and said, he would send the prescription by her father, who accordingly on the afternoon of the same day repaired to her physician's house. The prescription ordered the application of blisters externally, and the occasional use of a certain syrup. The paste for the blisters and the syrup were made up at an apothecary's, and sent home. Maria Louisa, not knowing what the pot of blister-paste contained, asked a certain barber, who heedlessly told her it was an electuary to be taken next morning. Accordingly, the girl on the following day attempted to take some, but finding that it stuck to her mouth, and resisted her efforts to swallow it, she made it up into small pills, which she passed into her stomach with whey and water. About an hour after, she began to feel a burning heat within her bowels, that caused her to shriek most piteously, and drew about her all the neighbours, who, anxious to alleviate her sufferings, gave her broth, which, when she had with difficulty drank it, only increased her agony. The weeping mother flew to inform her husband, who was at his shop, and he instantly repaired to the physician, who, from the symptoms described, was not slow in divining the

occasion of this frightful catastrophe. Whereupon, the father, distracted, flew to his daughter's apartment: "'Tis I, 'tis I!" he bitterly exclaimed, "who have poisoned you, my daughter, by not letting you know the paste sent was for a blister." "Well, then," said the dying girl, "if it is all over with me, give me the relic of St. John Joseph of the Cross, which is within the glass case;" and receiving it into her hands, she cried out: "Blessed Joseph, grant me speedily either life or death!" and sent for her confessor; when suddenly her pains ceased, the spasms left her, her strength returned, and of the sore within her mouth not a vestige remained. She was visited by the physician, and other individuals, who were constrained to own that this was, indeed, a miracle. The other miracle was wrought in favour of an aged priest, called Francis Salemo, who was suffering from an intestinal rupture, aggravated in a most frightful manner by a fall from a horse. Night and day he passed in sleepless agony, from which neither laudanum, nor opiates of any kind, could procure him any alleviation. He was even suspended by the feet with his head downwards, in hopes of restoring the bowels to their proper position. All was in vain,—symptoms of inflammation appeared; and no chance of life remained, but in submitting to a surgical operation, whose issue, from the extreme stage to which his disorder had arrived, and his advanced

age, seemed hopeless. Still he was advised to try it by the bishop, who came to visit him, and to recommend himself earnestly to the blessed John Joseph. For this purpose, he sent him a picture of the saint, whom the priest had no sooner invoked with fervent confidence, than instantaneously he was restored to perfect health, and never afterwards experienced the slightest relapse of the disorder, which had brought him to the brink of eternity, only that its miraculous cure might be a more signal triumph to religion, and to the powerful advocacy of St. John Joseph of the Cross.

## ST. PACIFICUS OF SAN SEVERINO.

C.

1653—1721.

ST. BONAVENTURE relates that St. Francis, visiting the city of San Severino, preached to its inhabitants, and converted many of them to God. Many miracles likewise he there performed, although the record of them is now nowhere to be found ; but one standing miracle he left, to attest to succeeding ages the power of grace and divine love, which, as a precious inheritance, the holy seraph bequeathed also to other cities of Italy, by whom it has been ever guarded and carefully preserved, even to our times, so that it still flourishes in that favoured land. For the people of the same city, receiving the institute of religious men, that the saint had founded, established for them a monastery, upon which, as upon a garden of delights, the dew of heaven hath, in every age, descended, producing amongst its inmates, and the pious inhabitants of the city, many illustrious saints, as fair fruits of that grace, whose

seed was scattered in all the places where St. Francis preached the delights and mysteries of divine love. Nor in these latter ages, have these fruits fallen into decay, for almost within the memory of our fathers, were they shown forth in the holy saint whose life we undertake to write. But before we enter on it, we would observe, that he who shall expect to find it filled with those striking actions which are usually supposed to abound in the lives of the saints, will be disappointed, inasmuch as the holiness and virtue of St. Pacificus consisted chiefly in the exact discharge of all his duties, in the careful fulfilment of his religious vows, and in the sedulous practice of the three heavenly virtues, faith, hope, and the perfect love of God and man. And although we may be unable to set forth our narration according to the order of time and the series of his actions, yet we trust that the devout reader will rest contented with that account of him, which, instead of tracing the events of his mortal career, will endeavour to shadow forth that more spiritual life, whereby he was on earth dwelling, through the practice of the theological virtues, with God and his saints, with whom he is now united in the glory of heaven.

St. Pacificus was born at San Severino, in the year 1653. His parents, Antony Maria Divini and Maria Angela Bruni, were not less illustrious by their noble birth than by their virtuous life and

the exact education of their children in the ways of piety and grace. He was baptized on the 1st of March, under the names of Charles Antony, which he retained until he entered the order of St. Francis, as we shall afterwards see. He began so early to give indications of that exalted piety to which it pleased God to raise him, that his bishop thought him worthy, at the age of three years, to receive the holy sacrament of confirmation; and before he had reached his fifth year, he began to seek opportunities of mortification by mixing ashes with the food prepared for him; and when sometimes asked the reason, he replied, "that in such seasoning, he found all his delight and gratification." He showed no taste for the ordinary amusements of children, but spent his time in making little altars, and adorning them with the pictures of the saints; before which, he was seen to pray for several hours. His conversation was wholly of God, Our blessed Lady, and the saints; and towards his parents and other relatives, he was ever obedient, and prompt in performing their commands. As he grew up, he increased in humility and devotion, and daily frequented the churches, assisted at the divine office, heard several masses, and listened attentively to the word of God, delivered in sermons and catechetical discourses. But he did not allow these occupations to interfere with his studies, his attendance at school, and other duties, wherein he

was so exact, that his masters were accustomed to point him out to his school-fellows as a perfect model of piety and obedience; and so great was the respect inspired by his saintly conversation, that wherever he appeared, his companions instantly abandoned any light or improper discourses in which they had been engaged, and willingly received his reproofs, and listened to his earnest exhortations to piety and the fear of God.

His excellent parents, who had suffered many losses in their worldly substance, died while he was yet young, and left him to the care of his maternal uncle. He was a man of rough and severe disposition, harsh and disagreeable to all that approached him; and, utterly forgetting the soft and delicate manner of life to which his nephew had been accustomed, he employed him in the lowest and most humiliating domestic occupations, and even allowed him to be subject to the insolence and contemptuous treatment of his servants. But Charles fulfilled their commands with alacrity and cheerfulness, and patiently endured all their persecutions, remembering the sufferings of Our blessed Jesus upon the cross. Nor did he refuse to carry burdens and comply with other humbling injunctions, in the sight of those who well remembered that in his parents' life-time he had been used to be well clothed and carefully attended, being himself the master and not the slave of servants. He re-



joined in the low estimation in which he was held, and took advantage of the situation in which he was placed, to collect the leavings and broken meat from his uncle's table, for the poor who came thither for relief.

By this humble and saintly conduct, he rendered himself worthy of that divine grace which called him to a closer union with God. To dedicate himself to his service, he resolved, in his seventeenth year, after having taken counsel of his confessors and other spiritual directors, to retire wholly from the world, and secure his innocence by the severe mortification and solitude of a conventual life. Having diligently considered in which of the religious orders he could best comply with his ardent desire of following Our blessed Redeemer in self-mortification and abasement, he humbly begged to be admitted into the strict order of minor observants of St. Francis. The fame of his sanctity was so well established, that he was joyfully received as a novice, and clothed with the habit in the convent of Forano, in the diocese of Osimo, on the Feast of the Holy Innocents, in 1670, under the name of brother Pacificus. The year of his noviciate he distinguished by the most punctual discharge of the minutest obligations imposed by the severe rule of life he had embraced; and, not content with the ordinary prayer prescribed to novices, he spent all the time left at his own disposal in a chapel dedi-

cated to St. Francis, within the inclosure of the noviciate. His resolution of abstaining from flesh meat was never violated, and he fasted every Saturday on bread and water. During the time of mental prayer, he remained immoveably fixed in the contemplation of the heavenly mysteries, until the voice of his superior interrupted his meditation, and retiring from the choir, he returned to the chapel before-mentioned to continue his prayer. He never failed in the duties enjoined by the rule for the practice of humility and mortification.

In this manner, he displayed such surpassing models of purity, singleness and innocence of heart, that he was unanimously admitted to make his solemn profession on the anniversary of the feast whereon he had entered the order. In obedience to the will of his superiors, he applied himself to the study of philosophy and theology; but without allowing them to distract his heart and soul from the love of prayer and constant union with God. It is not given to us to describe the earnest affection and profound humility wherewith he prepared to receive the sublime dignity of the priesthood. By many of the faithful who assisted at his first mass, he was observed to sigh and shed tears abundantly; and so ardent was his devotion towards this august sacrifice, that he never, save when prevented by illness, abstained from celebrating the holy mysteries, during which the bystanders were

moved by his fervour to tears of compunction and piety.

When he had completed his course of studies, he was appointed to teach philosophy to his brethren; but feeling himself called to labour in the vineyard of the Lord, he obtained leave to resign his chair, and wholly devote himself to preaching and hearing the confessions of the faithful, whom he treated with such a spirit of unction and mildness, that many were brought to God, and he was esteemed a sure guide to those that sat in darkness and the shadow of death. But the perfection of his virtue lay in the observance of every ordinary duty. Neither loss of sight nor an ulcer in his leg, with which he was affected, could prevent him from faithfully assisting with the rest of the community at the Matins and other prayers, by night, as well as by day; and, prostrating himself upon the ground, which he frequently kissed, he fervently adored the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, and was heard at times to exclaim, in the fulness of his heart, "My God and my all!" As about the middle of his life he became deaf, his brethren heard the prayers which he uttered almost without interruption, for he took only three or four hours of sleep upon a bed, so rough and uncomfortable, that it seemed made for mortification and torment, rather than ease and repose. Upon the vigils preceding the festivals of the Church, especially those

dedicated to Our blessed Lady, he fasted on water and a small piece of bread, which he had kept for the week before exposed to the scorching heat of the sun. He went almost barefoot and without any covering on his legs, although the ulcers before-mentioned inspired compassion and horror in all who chanced to see them. Not a sigh, not a complaint ever escaped his lips; he cheerfully endured all in imitation of the most bitter sufferings of Our Lord Jesus, to whom be glory evermore! He sought the poorest and roughest habit, and the only ornaments of his cell were a crucifix, a breviary, and one or two pictures. His eyes were never raised from the ground, and his silence was seldom broken, lest his mind should be distracted from a continual sense of the presence of God; and he seldom spoke to any but his superior and director, save when his zeal urged him to encourage his brethren in fervour and perseverance. His charity would not allow him to entertain the slightest judgment to their prejudice; so that when the conduct of one was represented to him as a violation of the rule, he sweetly replied, "Who can tell what his motives may have been?"

The respect and admiration excited by his exemplary life, induced the brethren to elect him guardian or superior of the Convent of Our Lady of Grace in his native city, an office which he was compelled, after much reluctance, to accept. His

virtues now shone forth, as 'a bright and shining light, to guide those under his care, to the imitation of his sedulous conformity with the rigorous discipline prescribed in that severe house, and of his fervent love of God. This and all his other virtues were built upon the solid foundation of a most lively faith; not consisting merely in that belief which the Church teaches to be necessary for salvation, but rising to that clearer and more heavenly insight into the mysteries of faith, which, on earth, excites in the soul a more intimate conviction of their truth and beauty, and in the saints daily gathers new strength and vigour, until death unites them to God; when the veil, before which they have so long adored in profound awe, being withdrawn, their knowledge becomes intuitive, and the spark of faith is merged in the bright effulgence and clear vision of heaven. It stirred up in him such a full conviction of the Divine mysteries, that he would gladly have shed his blood in attestation of their truth. His countenance brightened and he seemed out of himself, as often as he recited the apostles' or the Athanasian creed. His familiar discourses and his sermons illustrated the mysteries of faith; he exhorted his penitents to believe firmly all that the holy Church teacheth, and would tell them to make an act of faith in the holy tribunal of penance. When he chanced to find children playing in the cloisters, he taught them to recite

acts of faith, contrition, and the Christian virtues; and meeting children tending flocks or herds in the country, he would enter into loving discourses with them, and instruct their simple minds in the doctrines and practices of religion. To those more advanced in age, he was wont to explain how faith without good works is dead, and withereth like a plant wanting moisture, and so produceth not fruits unto eternal life.

He felt a burning zeal and desire that our holy faith, wherewith his soul was so deeply penetrated, should be made known to distant and barbarous nations, and he prayed earnestly to God for the victory of the defenders of Christendom over their Mahometan foes, in the fierce war that raged in those days between them. And when rumours were abroad that the Catholic force had been worsted, he knew, by the foresight which God had given him that the intelligence was false, and foretold the day whereupon the Moslem power was to be crushed; saying to his brethren, "Good news: to-day battle will be given to the Turk under Belgrade, and Prince Eugene will gain the victory." As he had said, even so did the event, as was afterwards found, in all points confirm his prediction. If his superiors would have consented, he would have flown upon wings of love to spread the knowledge of our holy faith in the most distant parts, for whenever he heard his brethren speak of the diffi-

culties, dangers, and sufferings, to which missionaries are exposed amongst infidels, he would exclaim, with a countenance all on fire, "O that I could be placed in such a situation!" But, as he well knew that the grace he so ardently desired was denied him, he laboured, by continual fastings and austerity, to purify his soul, and render himself more and more worthy of receiving the vivid impressions which the divine mysteries leave upon the heart of God's chosen servants. He would have fasted every Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, but his superior having restricted him to two days' fast in the week, he cheerfully obeyed; although upon the two last days he never went down to the public meals, but one of the brethren placed in his cell two small pieces of bread, with a vessel, containing less than a pint of water, to serve both for morning and evening; yet, it was often found that he had not even touched them. But the flame of faith he nourished, with the fuel of constant and deep meditation upon the mysteries of our Saviour's passion, in honour whereof he oftentimes said mass at the altar dedicated to Jesus crucified; and performed, moreover, the pious exercise of the *Via Crucis*, or Way of the Cross, and excited others to follow his example, and tread with him the rugged way to Calvary, by a contemplation of the twelve mysteries into which the exercise is divided.

From this lively faith sprang his devotion and

reverence in all the duties prescribed by our holy religion. For so completely was he absorbed in awe and veneration, when he stood in the presence of Our sweet Lord in the blessed Eucharist, that, in spite of the ulcers in his legs, he was accustomed to fall upon his knees whenever he passed before the altar whereon He reposed; and would remain still and motionless, heedless of the gnats which, with their sharp stings, annoyed him in summer; and even, when sickness confined him to his bed, he frequently rose up to go to the church, but was recalled by the voice of his superiors (to which he never failed in obedience,) commanding him to remain in bed; where, beating his breast and giving vent to the overflowing feelings of his heart, he filled the bystanders with admiration and love of God. But most of all in the august sacrifice of the mass, were his faith and reverence made manifest. His sighs were heard by all, and his tears flowed in copious streams. Men came from afar to witness the outpourings of his love, and many saw him raised several inches above the surface of the altar-step. He remained in this posture, shaking with an extraordinary trembling for the space of a *Credo*, and even of several hours, as the processes of his beatification record, so that it needed the command of his superior to recall him to his natural position. He stopped from time to time, as if rapt in extacy, for he was tasting the sweets and joys of



the presence of his beloved Jesus in the venerable sacrament.

During the communion, and especially the receiving of the chalice, he felt his soul steeped in the delicious enjoyment of the food of angels; and afterwards, until he returned into the sacristy, his countenance, usually pale and wasted, was overspread with a lively flush. He trembled with sudden fear, as he ended the *memento* for the dead, through pity and compassion towards the souls who are enduring the dreadful torments of purgatory. It pleased God, on several occasions, to show to the world how acceptable to Him was the surpassing devotion of his servant during the unbloody sacrifice. Pacificus was wont to celebrate mass at a place called Cimorella, at some distance from his convent; and, although his companion was obliged to dry his habit, which had been soaked with the rain and melting snow that had fallen during their journey thither, not a drop had touched him. But still more singular was the miracle which took place at the river Menocchia; for when it had been swollen to such an unusual height, during his absence from the convent, while celebrating mass at the Abbey of St. Antony, that he and his companions could not, on their return, ford it as they were accustomed, Pacificus walked boldly on, — and lo! the waters divided and left him a dry passage, and his sandal was not

wet; nor did any of the sand or mud with which the bed was filled, attach itself thereto; while his brethren were obliged to pass the river upon horses. And, as in the lives of the saints, we find each of them distinguished by some peculiar mark of favour, as if Our good Lord sought new ways of displaying his love in their regard, so it happened, that, although the candles lighted upon the altar during his mass would not have sufficed for half the time, it was observed that they burned without being consumed, and as long as the sacrifice lasted, even for an hour or more. He never allowed a day to pass without offering up the great victim of the new law, save during the three last years of his life, when blindness being added to his former deafness, he could no longer satisfy the cravings of his devotion: but he received the holy communion frequently, and heard each day all the masses that were celebrated in the conventual church. In like manner, his veneration for holy things was displayed in his zeal for God's house, wherein he would sternly reprehend any violation of the respect due to it; and he taught all, both by word and example, with what respect the priests, who are the living temples of the Lord, are to be treated, as the seraphic St. Francis prescribes in his rule; and he prayed particularly for the pope, the cardinals, bishops, and prelates of the Church.

Next to God, he entertained a most tender de-

votion to Our blessed Lady, the Queen of heaven, to whom he had recourse in all the necessities of his soul. He invoked her sweet name, and glorified the fulness of graces wherewith she is adorned, desiring that she might be praised, revered and invoked by all. He fasted rigorously on the vigils of her festivals; and on these days, his countenance, usually wan and pallid, became fresh and florid, remaining so until the following day. His affection was rewarded by Our loving Mother; for he passed to eternal rest upon the 24th of September, which is dedicated to Our Lady of Mercy. Pacificus felt a particular devotion towards his good angel, the chaste spouse of Mary, St. Joseph, and St. Francis of Assisium, whose custom of keeping seven lents during the year, he faithfully followed, even in his old age, until his superiors commanded him to abandon it.

His faith was equalled by his constant and unwavering hope and trust in the mercies and graces of God. With what contempt did he look upon the things of this earth, vile and transitory as they are, and fix all his desires on heaven, exclaiming, "Heaven, heaven! The things of this world pass quickly away; would that we knew what heaven means!" Men in their afflictions sought comfort from him, who, with a heart overflowing with sympathy and sweetness, raised his eyes to heaven, and told them to have patience and hope.

He trusted in the intercession of his chief protectress, Mary, ever blessed St. Joseph, and his patrons; but, most of all, in the promises which God has made to his servants. It stirred up tender emotions in those who heard him exclaim, "Oh heaven! heaven!" and as the end of his life drew near, his expressions and affections increased daily in fervour and hope. On one occasion, during the month of July 1721, the bishop of San Severino came to visit him: and, after spending some time in pious conversation with him, had quitted him, and was returning to his episcopal residence, when Pacificus suddenly rejoined him, exclaiming, "My lord, — heaven, heaven! and I shall soon follow you;" all present stood still in astonishment at these prophetic words, whose truth was soon proved, for the bishop died in fifteen days, and Pacificus within two months.

His confidence in God not only preserved him from sinking under the temptations to which his virtue was exposed from the malice of the devil, but God was pleased to make it a sure anchor of hope in the common wants and necessities of life. Thus, when the convent over which he presided was utterly unprovided with the means of subsistence, an unknown benefactor brought a considerable sum of money to the procurator, for the relief, he said, of the present wants of the convent of F. Pacificus. Sometimes the cook finding

all their store exhausted, ran to tell him that there was no dinner for the brethren : he calmly replied, " Shall we not eat ? " well knowing that before the hour of dinner, their benefactors would supply all that was necessary. On one occasion, the procurator told him, in a complaining tone, that their alms were exhausted ; but he quietly answered, " Let us not despond, for God will not fail in the helps which His divine Providence sends." Scarcely were the words spoken, than an unknown person, from a distant place, presented himself to the procurator, and gave him a large alms, which sufficed for the wants of the convent for a long time. More than once, when materials were wanting to complete the new rooms, which were added to the convent, and the workmen had complained thereof to the saint, he replied, " God will provide whatever is necessary." And, accordingly, on their return from their meals, they were surprised to find the materials increased in such quantities, that they asked one another who could have brought them in such a short space of time ; and one day, the lime was found so pure and well prepared, that it was reported among the masons that Pacificus had employed angels in the work. This virtue of hope had so completely weaned him from love of earthly enjoyment and human gratification, that he gave up the time allowed for recreation to prayer and meditation, and never took the air,

either in the garden or out of the convent, save when sent by his superiors; he neither received nor wrote letters, and was with much reluctance induced to see one of his female relations, who came to visit him. Trusting in the certainty of divine retribution, he subjected his body to rigorous fasts, and severe disciplines, to take which, besides the three times, each week, prescribed by the rule, he was often watched retiring to the belfry, or some other secret place, that he might not be seen by men. And whatever harsh treatment he met with at the hands of his superiors, or his brethren, his only words were, "Be it so, for the love of God; God wills it so, his holy will be done." By these words he often inculcated to others to bear all things with patience. To these afflictions, must be added those sufferings and visitations of God, whereby he rendered himself an imitator of the passion of Jesus. For, besides blindness, deafness and old age, and the neglect of his attendants, he endured, without a murmur, or even a word of complaint, the excruciating pain produced by the ulcers in his legs, from his youth down to the time of his death.

Forasmuch as out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh, the discourse and conversation of Pacificus were ever of the love of God. His boundless goodness was his constant theme; and he was accustomed to protest to all with whom

he conversed, that he was resolved always to love God above everything created; to Him he referred all his thoughts and actions, and was often heard to exclaim, "*Deus meus et omnia. Quis es tu dulcissime Jesu, et quis sum ego vermiculus terræ?*" My God and my all! Who art thou, sweetest Jesus, and who am I, a poor worm of the earth?" The fire of heavenly charity produced a physical effect upon him—shooting sparkles of real light from his eyes; and so great was the warmth excited in his body, that he never approached the fire in the coldest winters, but kept his window open to moderate the heat which inwardly burned within his breast. He was filled with affliction and sorrow of heart as often as he reflected upon the injuries and insults of men against our loving Jesus; and many attested, after his death, the powerful effects which his exhortations to the love of God wrought upon their souls. In order not to interrupt his union with God, he always recited the rosary while passing through the streets or along the cloisters; and one of his brethren, whose cell was near his, hearing him repeat the Our Father aloud during the greater part of the night, advised him to take some rest; but he answered, "We must not caress the body;" and so saying, he went on with his prayer. His companions were often edified and moved to devotion by hearing the fervent ejaculations and aspirations which he made to

God; for, as he was deaf in the latter part of his life, he was obliged to raise his voice louder, that he himself might hear it: and once hearing the sound of music, he suddenly burst forth into the ejaculation, "O what will it be in heaven!" His love of God produced not a slavish dread of incurring the punishment of sin, but a filial affection and reverence towards his Heavenly Father, which would not allow him to commit the slightest offence that could be displeasing to him. He avoided sin through love of God, not through fear of chastisement; he performed His law in gladness of heart, for his hope rendered him secure of the infinite mercy and retribution of his Lord. It was attested by his confessors, especially F. Gabriel of Majolati, that his conscience was never burdened with any grievous sin that had stained the purity of his mind or heart. He was accustomed to frequent the holy sacraments of penance and the Eucharist every morning; but on one occasion he could find no one who was willing to hear his confession, so persuaded were all his brethren of his spotless innocence: at last one of them yielded to his humble and earnest entreaties; but not finding matter for absolution, gave him his blessing, and dismissed him. And although he besought his confessors to impose heavy penances in atonement for the grievous sins he had confessed, they were obliged merely, in order to content him, to enjoin him a *Hail*



*Mary*, or some other slight satisfaction. This was attested by several of his confessors, particularly Father Severinus of Jesi, to whom he had made his general confession. In proportion to his love of God was the zeal which he displayed in bringing others to the like filial detestation of whatever could offend Him; and, most of all, during the time that he announced the divine word to the faithful, were his eloquence and energy directed to stir up in men a horror and dread of taking the holy name of God in vain; and many were by his means led to compunction and repentance, and the abandonment of this abominable vice. Whenever he celebrated mass, those who assisted at it, so far from becoming weary of the extraordinary length of time he spent in it, felt themselves moved to more perfect love and reverence towards this most holy sacrifice. The clerk was accustomed to leave the church when he came to the canon; and, after performing other duties prescribed to him in the convent, found Pacificus still at the same part, absorbed in extatic contemplation, as he had left him.

Our Saviour has declared that he who loves not his neighbour whom he seeth, cannot love God whom he seeth not. Wherefore, the love which he entertained towards God, was nourished by a perfect, all-embracing charity towards his neighbour. With what persuasive sweetness and solemn

earnestness did he labour, in the holy sacrament of penance, to urge and encourage men to love God ! With what solicitude did he convince them of the enormity of sin, and the delights and consolations of those whose heart belongs wholly to God ! This, indeed, is true charity, and love of our neighbour,—which mourns over his faults as if they were our own,—which guides our brother into the right path,—and, compassionating his weakness and his relapses, leads him onwards to heaven. Where is there charity like unto that which seeks to unite all men in a bond of detestation of sin, and earnest striving after heaven ? His penitents declared, upon oath, that they had never felt so much comfort and relief from the sacrament of penance, as when they confessed their sins to Pacificus. On one occasion, a man advanced in years came to his cell, and, kneeling down, requested him to hear his confession ; but he told him to confess his sins first to Our crucified Saviour, and he would then give him absolution. Meanwhile, Pacificus took several turns about the room, saying his beads. The penitent again besought him to hear his confession ; and the servant of God, after keeping him a few minutes longer, heard his confession, and showed him the enormity of his transgressions, exciting him to fresh sorrow, and resolution of avoiding them for the future ; so that, detesting all his past sins, he began a new

course of life, and completely abandoned his former evil habits. Even in this world, his charity and zeal for the extirpation of sin, and the kindling of perfect love in the hearts of all men, was displayed in the numerous conversions which he made of abandoned sinners to virtue. Wherefore it pleased our Lord to communicate to him, for this end, an insight into the consciences of his penitents, and a knowledge of their secret sins; so that many were thereby moved to repentance and amendment of life. To several persons he made known sins which they had omitted to confess, either through forgetfulness or false shame. One or two examples we here set down, that it may be seen how God seconded the charity of his servant, and co-operated with him in the work of saving souls from sin and perdition. Jacob Scocchia of Cingoli having told the saint, at the end of his confession, that he had nothing more to accuse himself of, was thus interrogated by him: "What evil have God and the ever-blessed Virgin done to you? Do you not remember how, last Wednesday, about mid-day, you swore three times by the most holy name of Mary, and twice by the most holy name of God, when your companion, with whom you were at work, took you unawares in the middle of the road, and, striking you on the back, tried to throw you on the ground?" The penitent heard him with wonder and astonishment,

for the fact, just as he had described it, had taken place four miles from the convent, out of which Pacificus scarcely ever went; and he could not have learnt it, save by light from above. One Antonio di Severino coming to confess to him during the harvest, was asked if he had no other sins to charge himself with, and having answered in the negative, the saint exclaimed, "What! do you not remember that on such a day you spoke harshly to your mother; and on such another you consented to an impure thought?" He then detailed to him all the circumstances of the latter sin, with the time and place where it had happened; whereupon the penitent, carefully examining all the particulars of the secret desire in which he had indulged, and the conversation which had led to it, found them to be exactly as he had represented them; and, conceiving a deep sorrow and contrition for his sins, confessed them, and receiving absolution, returned home full of thankfulness to God for His merciful manifestation of his sins to His servant. Paul Coletti, then fifteen years of age, was brought by his grandfather to confession to Pacificus; but, as he was in the habit of concealing certain sins, through shame of confessing them, he did not accuse himself of them on this occasion. The saint gave him absolution, and went to say mass, which Paul remained in the church to hear. As soon as it was ended, Pacificus

returned immediately to the church, called his penitent, and, having obtained his permission to speak about his confession, reproved him, telling him that his past confessions had been sacrilegious, because he had always concealed such and such sins, which he mentioned with all their particulars. He then exhorted him to confess them, which he immediately did, being persuaded that God had revealed them to him during the celebration of the holy sacrifice. Another boy, of about the same age as the preceding, came to confession to Pacificus, to whom he was previously quite unknown, and was strongly exhorted by him to make a good confession. The holy man then discovered to him in clear terms some sins committed by him, of which he had made slight account: he told him, particularly, "that he tended cows, and that these, on the Tuesday before, had damaged a field of grain belonging to a person whom he named; and that, on the Wednesday previous, the same cows which he was tending, had, about two hours after mid-day, damaged another field in like manner;" adding, that, in the evening of the same day, being asked by his father, if it was true the cows had done this damage, he had strongly denied it; and that his father, seizing a leather girdle, had struck him several times; and for this reason he had run out of the house." The boy acknowledged that the saint's account was correct in every point; but

he went on to remind him, "that whilst the cows were among the grain, he had set himself to play with two other boys of his own age (naming them), to whom he had lost three pence; moreover, that, six weeks before, he had played with one of the same boys, and had lost fifteen pence; and that, for three or four days, through vexation at his loss, he had torn his hair with such hatred against the winner, that he would willingly have destroyed him;" and concluded by telling him, that "he had lost all respect for his two elder brothers, and had done them serious injury." The boy, seeing the knowledge which had been given to his confessor of his whole life, was easily induced to make a sincere confession, to the profit of his soul, and an effectual reconciliation with God.

So great, indeed, was the tender affection of Pacificus towards his neighbours, whereby he sought to relieve their souls from the burden of sin, and heal the wounds and assuage the pain which it had caused, that all who were in affliction or tribulation, fled to him for comfort and help. He felt their misfortunes and miseries, as if they were his own, and strengthened them in suffering and resignation to the Divine will. He was commonly styled, "the loving father of the afflicted and sorrowful;" and men of all ranks, from the lowest to the highest, sought and obtained consolation from him. In the processes made for his beatification,

are many attestations, that none ever had recourse to him without being eased and supported in their disquiet and anguish of mind.

But his practice of the corporal works of mercy almost exceeded the spiritual virtues which have been already described. Even before he entered the order of St. Francis, his charity to the poor had attracted them to his uncle's house ; but after his religious profession, he set no bounds to his commiseration and desire of assisting them. If his vow of poverty left him without the means of giving alms, he aided them by his prayers, and begged his friends to supply their wants. Not content with this, he often left his own food untouched,—taking only a few morsels of bread dipped in wine,—that it might be given to the poor, who are daily relieved at the door of the convents in Catholic countries ; as was formerly the pious custom in England,—until the monks who practised, and the institutions which supplied, such charity, were proscribed, and their lands and property seized by the rapacity and avarice of the powerful and mighty.

If any of his brethren fell sick, he disregarded his own sufferings, that he might fly to their relief. But his chief means of supporting them in their illness, was by fervent and continual prayer ; and the processes record, in confirmation of the efficacy of his prayers, and the reward which God bestowed

upon his charity, that once, when F. Dominic Antony of Cingoli was thought to be at the point of death with a malignant fever, which presented the most unfavourable symptoms, and had been recommended to his prayers, some of his brethren enquired if the sick man was to recover? he replied, with great humility, "So many prayers are offered, that the Lord will in the end graciously hear them." The event justified his prediction, as F. Dominic himself attested in legal form. Sometimes he declined to pray for those, who, knowing the efficacy of his prayers, had requested him to intercede for them; but his refusal did not proceed from a want of charity, but from his profound humility and dread of being reputed a saint.

But, most of all, did his heart burn with the desire of freeing the souls, who are afflicted in purgatory, from their most cruel and bitter torments. He remembered that "it is a holy and a wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins;" and therefore he cheerfully took upon himself to satisfy, both by prayer and mortification, some portion of the punishment which the souls of the members of the suffering Church are doomed to undergo. He offered up fervent prayers in their behalf, and every day recited for them the whole of the office for the dead; adding thereto corporal sufferings, through the vehemence of his desire to see them freed from



their torments, and united to the beatific vision and enjoyment of God.

Moreover, he was often chosen to be the judge and umpire in the differences and dissensions of others, and by his means, peace and harmony were restored between parties at variance. And so effectual were his exhortations and so lasting the reconciliations which he produced, that he was generally called "Pacificus," that is, the peace-maker both in deed and name. Thus was he inflamed with the fire which Our Lord came to cast upon the earth, and thus was he a perfect imitator of the Blessed Jesus, who died for love.

While he attained to such perfection in those virtues which are common to all Christians, it cannot be supposed that he fell short in the practice of those peculiar virtues to which he had bound himself by his religious vows. His spirit of poverty led him to detest all that savoured of worldly riches and ostentation, and to seek in his dress, and every thing that could be called his own, whatever was poorest and most worn. But he remembered the saying of St. Bernard, *paupertas mihi semper placuit, sordes verò nunquam*; and out of respect to his priestly character, endeavoured, as St. Bonaventure recommends, to unite this virtue with outward cleanliness and decency. While he was superior, he would never allow the brethren to go out on the appointed days, to beg more bread, as

long as there was any remaining in the convent. Surpassing and wonderful, in like manner, was his pure, virginal chastity; for he would never permit any one to see any part of his body uncovered, or even to dress his ulcers, save once or twice, when he allowed Brother Vittorio, who was greatly in his confidence, to do it. With the same jealousy he kept a guard over his eyes, through which evil thoughts so often enter the mind. When he walked in the streets or in the cloisters, he drew his hood down over his face, in such a way, that some of his brethren could never see the colour of his eyes; and for the same reason, he would never converse with strangers, or even his own sister, for more than a few seconds. It was attested upon oath, that when she went on one occasion to see him, he came down to the door of the convent, and standing within it, saluted her with these words, "Blessed be Jesus Christ! Are you well?" She answering in the affirmative, he rejoined, "Thanks be to God." She then went on to ask him if he was willing that certain distant relations should be appointed heirs to her property? He at once replied, "For justice's sake, to our own, to our own," and so saying he returned to his cell. God gave a manifest proof how agreeable to Him was the purity of his servant; for his cell, his habit, the bandages wherewith he bound his sores, and, after his death, his body, breathed a celestial fragrance. We have

already seen in several instances, how completely he had resigned his own will, and subjected himself to a perfect, unhesitating obedience, even while he was living with his uncle in the world. His superiors, or those in whose care he happened to be on account of illness and other causes, knew that they had only to speak to be obeyed; thus, when his superior had sent him, in spite of his sickness and inability, to walk far, to say mass at a place two miles and a half from the convent, Pacificus instantly set off in the rain, and walked at such a round pace, that his companion, who was young and vigorous, could hardly keep up with him. The superior, perceiving his own imprudence in sending him out under such circumstances, begged his pardon; but he interrupted him by saying, "It was God, and not you, father, that sent me." It was well known that he possessed the gift of prophecy, although his humility made him seek to conceal it. His superior, however, put his obedience to the test, by commanding him to specify who was to be elected provincial in the chapter of their order then held at Monte Santo. For awhile there was a contest within him, between his humility, which inclined him to be silent, and his obedience, which urged him to speak. Obedience prevailed over his reluctance, and, upon the repeated instances of his superior, he informed him that Father Joseph of Monte Falcone would be chosen;

and the result of the election confirmed his prediction. On a like command, he foretold to F. Dominic of Cingoli, that he would be elected provincial. As the superiors are accustomed, upon their election, to issue new regulations, which are read aloud to all the religious, Pacificus, fearing lest, on account of his deafness, he might not have heard them all, took especial care to have them distinctly explained to him by one of his brethren. But the most surprising instance of his obedience, and the favour with which God regarded it, was related by F. Bernardine, who had heard it from a religious that was present when it happened. His superior was standing with another religious at a window looking into a garden wherein Pacificus was walking, though at a good distance from them. They were conversing of his heroic obedience, when the former, to give a convincing proof of it upon the spot, said in a low tone, "Father Pacificus, come here." At this command, which was hardly audible to the person with whom he was conversing, Pacificus answered, "Immediately, directly, Father Guardian;" and then coming in all haste, he humbly inquired what were his commands. The superior, astonished as well as edified, told him there was nothing more for the present, and dismissed him with his blessing. He obeyed his companions and even the lay-brothers with equal exactness and promptitude. When he was on a journey with

them, his discourse was always of the mercies and greatness of God, but in all other things, he obeyed them as his superiors. On one occasion, he undertook the rough and rugged journey to the sacred mount of Alvernia, famous through the whole world as the Calvary where the seraphic St. Francis received the wonderful stigmata, or five wounds of Our divine Redeemer's passion. What were the loving aspirations, what the raptures of his soul, what his contemplations upon the passion of Jesus, in that most holy and most venerable sanctuary ! Of these we do not now speak, but his companions relate, that, during the whole of the journey, he displayed the ready obedience of a novice. And so, during his sicknesses, he obeyed the iufirmarian ; and so, during his last illness, he obeyed his superiors when they forbade him to comply with his desire to go down to the church, or even to kneel in his room, to pour out the tender affections of his soul.

Spiritual writers tell us, that obedience cannot exist, unless it be grounded upon humility ; and therefore did Pacificus deem himself unworthy of the esteem of men, and endeavour on every occasion to avoid their praises, and seek to draw upon himself contempt ; in a word, to attain this virtue in its fullest extent and perfection. His habit was always the oldest and most threadbare that he could find ; in the convent, he obeyed the orders of his

very inferiors; in the refectory, he sat in the lowest place, although, as being senior, his place was next to the superior; and even while he was guardian, he could hardly be induced to sit in his proper place; he received harsh words, reproof, and sarcasms without a murmur,—only raising his eyes to heaven, he would usually say, “Be it so for the love of God.” He used every artifice to hide his mortifications and cruel disciplines from others, and anxiously sought to conceal the supernatural powers which God had imparted to him.

Who can say with what severe mortifications and fasts, he subdued his body? Besides fasting, as we have seen, three times in the week, until his superiors restricted him to Friday and Saturday, whereon he sometimes did not even taste a morsel of bread, or a drop of water, and the Lents of St. Francis, he made the little that he did eat, a means of additional mortification, by mixing his food with ashes, as was attested by many who observed him attentively. And another more remarkable example will confirm what we have just said. On occasion of the pardon of Asisium,\* a fair used,

\* The Perdona of Asisi, kept on the second of August, is so called from the plenary indulgence which Almighty God himself ordered St. Francis to give to all who should visit the Church of Asisi, or any of the Franciscan churches, upon that day. The autograph of St. Francis, containing his publication and grant of this indulgence, is still exposed to view in the sacristy of the great church at Asisi, to which an incredible number of pilgrims resort every year.

in his time, to be held in a square, near the convent of Forano. Pacificus passing through it, and smelling the flesh of roasted pork, said several times to his companion, "Do you perceive this smell?" The other, supposing that he had a desire of tasting some of the flesh, told the superior, who immediately ordered a piece of it to be brought and placed before him at table. He did not touch it, but requested the brother who served at table to gratify him by placing it before him until he should have eaten it. His request was complied with, and each day it was brought to table, until, at last, when it was putrid, he eat it, saying to himself, "Eat it, vile body; it is not pork now, as it was at first."

Besides the regular disciplines prescribed by rule three times in the week, he cruelly scourged himself thrice each day, with chains or cords, so as to fill all those with horror, who heard the whistling of the lash, or saw the abundance of blood which he shed during the flagellation. Covered with hair-shirts he undertook long journeys, over thorns and sharp stones, slept little, never approached the fire, and kept the window and door of his cell open, in the most rigorous winters, in order to hear the bell summoning him to the duties of the community. Thus did he keep his body subject to the spirit, and thus did he enter into glory, by sorrow and tribulation.

It may be easily inferred, from what has been already related, that in the state of union wherein his soul lived with God, he was enabled to penetrate the veil of time, and reveal future events; because, as St. Gregory observes, supernatural gifts serve to make known to men the sanctity of God's servants, and procure for them fame and reverence throughout the world. In the processes many facts are recorded, which prove in how high a degree he possessed the spirit of prophecy, not only with respect to extraordinary and great events, but even with regard to the ordinary occurrences of life. Two nuns in the convent of St. Clare, hearing that it was publicly reported that their father would be dismissed from his office, of surgeon to the city, at the expiration of his term, sent to ask Pacificus if the report would prove correct. He refused to give any reply for some time, but at last answered, through obedience to his superior, that for the next year he would be confirmed in his office; which was exactly verified, because, at the end of that year, he was dismissed. One Julian Zaffarini was in the habit of visiting Pacificus at the convent." The saint often repeated to him "that the Lord was incensed, and scourges were threatened;" wherefore Julian lived in great dread and apprehension. The fulfilment of his prophecy was not long delayed, for, in the year 1703, an awful earthquake spread ruin and deso-



lation over the whole of the states of the Church. And no sooner had this scourge passed over, than another succeeded, when, two years later, the Austrian troops, marching through La Marca, in which San Severino is situated, brought many grievous afflictions upon that country. Julian's brother seeing that they had quartered themselves in a field, near one of his farms, hastened to beg the saint's intercession, that his property might be spared; and soon received the consoling tidings from him, that he need not entertain the slightest fear or alarm. His prophecy proved true, for although many of the soldiers entered his house, no insult or injury was offered to him, nor was he forced, like many of his neighbours, to give up his oxen for the service of the army. Father John Baptist of Candelara relates a fact that happened to himself, and serves to show how God opened to His servant the secrets of hearts, into which none, save Himself, can penetrate. This religious was troubled with grievous internal temptations to leave the order of St. Francis, although he gave no outward signs, whereby any of his brethren could discover the hidden workings of his mind. One day, however, when he was suffering more than usual from these thoughts, the saint addressed him in choir, saying: "You are tempted to repent of having joined our order." The good father was, for a while, mute with astonishment and won-

der, at the light wherewith the saint was illumined, to see the inward bitterness and disquiet of his soul ; but Pacificus continued his discourse, by exhorting him to remain in the state to which God had called him. And accordingly he persevered in it, although he was afterwards tormented by many other adverse occurrences, which he endured with incredible patience and resignation ; because the saint had, on the same occasion, foretold them all, and so prepared his soul for meeting them. We will give only one more instance, to illustrate how completely all his supernatural gifts were exercised in the cause of charity, and the relief of his neighbour under affliction. Maria Gregoretti having sustained very heavy loss and expense in carrying on a law-suit, commenced by her deceased husband against the treasurer of the province, had recourse to F. Bonaventure, the saint's superior, to learn, through his means, the result of her suit. He commanded Pacificus to put up his prayers, and afterwards declare whatever God might therein reveal to him. He soon returned to say " that she must be of good cheer, because the most blessed Virgin would comfort her." Her joy upon hearing this answer may be easily conceived ; but it was soon interrupted by the receipt of a letter, which destroyed all hopes of an amicable arrangement of the dispute. She flew to the convent with the letter, complaining that F. Paci-

ficus had deceived her with flattering promises. The superior again commanded him to ask the light of Heaven, and when his prayer was ended, he told the superior to let her know, "that on the feast of the Purification of Our Lady she would be comforted, and that to her own advantage. In five days' time the prediction was verified; for, upon the very day he had mentioned, the treasurer came to her house, and told her that, not having been able to eat or sleep for three days and nights, he was anxious to come to an arrangement, and thereupon paid her three thousand crowns, to cover the losses she had suffered.

To these examples of the prophetic spirit of Pacificus, we might add many more, from the authentic acts of his beatification; but we think it more advisable to trace briefly some other proofs of the favour with which Almighty God regarded him, and of the manner in which his extraordinary sanctity was displayed to many. He was often seen raised, as before related, several inches above the ground, during the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice; and, on one occasion, he remained elevated in extacy, with his arms stretched out, and his eyes raised towards heaven, for more than four hours, as was related by a person who was present. The religious who served his mass were often favoured with the sight of these extatic transports; but the fact most surprising to the beholders, as is

mentioned in the processes, was, that while he was offering up the tremendous mysteries, his countenance not only changed from a pale to a florid hue, but shone with such supernatural brightness, that, upon the opposite wall, rays darting an unusual light were seen, which, as was observed by those who watched it purposely, could radiate from no other source than his face, because the sun was at the time hid with clouds, and concealed from sight.

We read in the *Flowerets of St. Francis*, and his life by St. Bonaventure, that the birds would hang motionless in the air, or rest upon the boughs, to hear his words, and would not depart until they had received his benediction. In like manner, as is attested in the processes by several eye-witnesses, the swallows would, in the month of August, fly into the cell of Pacificus, with extraordinary signs of joy and delight, and perch upon his hand; and whilst he played with them, they would not move until he dismissed them. Mario d'Orazio observed that when the saint went to Cimarella, these same birds would fly about him, and, leaving their nest in a neighbouring house, go forth to meet him; and if he happened to sleep there, they stayed with him, twittering during the whole of the night, so that the deponent could not sleep; and when, on one of these occasions, he asked the saint why they welcomed him with so much rejoicing, he evaded giving an answer, by saying, "perhaps they

fed well yesterday, and are now thanking God with their song." And, in the morning, when he began his journey, they accompanied him to a good distance on his way, and then returned to their nest. For these dumb animals are invited to honour the Lord, and even they, by their song, bless and praise His name, and therefore were they all made subject to man, that he, who alone possesseth speech, might be the organ and interpreter of their mutual and simultaneous thanksgiving unto God; and although, by the fall of our first parents, man has lost that command which was imparted to him over all creatures, yet we know full well that as often as men have been found upon the earth, who had never soiled the white robe of innocence, and had ever lived in a union of love and peace with God, the inferior and even the more savage creatures whom he hath made, have become meek and docile, and have listened to their words: for that which was lost by sin may be recovered by innocence; and to him who is obedient in all things to his Creator, those whom sin makes rebellious, show subjection and love.

The processes for his beatification contain the attestations of several eye-witnesses, that when he walked abroad, even in the most stormy weather, neither rain nor snow ever fell upon him, nor were his feet ever touched or soiled by the mud upon the roads, whilst his companions were obliged to change

their habits, drenched by rain that had fallen during their journey. Six or seven men were employed in making a load of fire-wood for the use of the convent, in the open air, during an abundant fall of snow. Pacificus, who was looking at them from his window, told them to continue their work, which they were preparing to leave, for the snow would not injure them. And as he spoke, the snow ceased to fall on the spot where they were, although it covered all the ground about it. When they had finished their work, they departed, and immediately the snow began again to fall upon the load and upon the spot where they had been employed.

But from the description of these virtues, and the wonderful effects produced by them, we must turn to the closing scenes of his pure and spotless life. Besides being deprived of sight and hearing for several years, he had been all along afflicted with the violent pain and the suppuration of the ulcers in his legs, when on a sudden they closed of themselves; but the absorption of so much ulcerous matter in the blood, produced a violent fever, which attacked him on the 16th of September, in 1721. He was well aware that this illness would terminate in his death, foretold by him, as we have seen, two months before, and, therefore, did he endure it, with all its torment and suffering, with resignation and patience, and bless and praise God for His mercies, praying Him to give him the

courage to undergo still greater agony and tribulation for His sake. He continued to repeat the acts of faith, hope, and charity, in the exercise of which his whole life had been engaged; but with what devotion, with what lively and fervent acts of humility, of faith, and religion and love, did he welcome the Lord of Glory, whom he had served so long and so faithfully, when he received him for the last time! His limbs had lost their vigour and action; but, gathering the little strength that remained, he was enabled to place himself upon his knees, and he recited, in a weak, but still audible, voice, that most tender prayer of St. Bonaventure, which begins, "*Sacrosanctæ et Individuæ Trinitati*;" and when, with those feelings of love and adoration, which no man can adequately describe, he had been comforted and strengthened with the bread of angels, he would fain have gone down to the church, as was his custom, to return thanks to God for having vouchsafed to visit him; but his superiors restrained him. Meanwhile, he ceased not giving praise and glory to God, and earnestly recommended himself to His infinite mercy; and, after some time, not being aware, through his defect in sight and hearing, of the presence of any one in his room, he rose from his bed, and placing himself devoutly on his knees, recited three *Ave Marias*, saying at the end, with singular earnestness, "Let these be, O my God, in satisfaction for

my sins." He would have prayed much longer, but his illness prevented him; and, as it became every moment more and more violent, the holy Sacrament of Extreme Unction was administered, which he received with the deepest feelings of faith and devotion. The physician then informed him that he had not much longer to live: he received the tidings with joy and gladness of heart, eagerly wishing to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. His brethren saw it was necessary to refresh his parched throat and mouth, and endeavoured to make him swallow a few drops of some restorative; but, in spite of his desire to comply with their command, he could not succeed in swallowing a single drop. As, however, it was absolutely necessary that he should take it, the infirmarian bethought himself of a much more efficacious means, and presenting the restorative anew, told him to drink it in honour of Our blessed Lady, whose feast the Church celebrated upon that day. On hearing her most sweet name, he took fresh strength, and swallowed every drop of it, without the slightest difficulty, to the surprise of every one present.

On the eighth day, his superiors judged it advisable to give him the last absolution, and the indulgence, *in articulo mortis*, according to the custom of that seraphic order. He was again prevented from kneeling down during this solemn

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rite; but, to gratify his devotion, was allowed to remain sitting upon his bed; when, folding his arms, in the form of a cross, upon his breast, and casting his eyes towards heaven, he received the general absolution and indulgence. As his departure was evidently at hand, his companions were summoned to his cell, to recite for him the "Recommendation of the Soul to God." Whilst his confessor was suggesting acts of resignation to the Divine will, he was observed to form the sign of the cross, and he endeavoured to beat his breast, in spite of his extreme weakness. As he lay thus upon his right side, pressing a crucifix in his hand, and showing, by the motion of his lips, (for he had lost the use of speech,) that he was making acts of faith and love, the brethren began the Recommendation of the Soul. At the words "Proficiscere, anima Christiana," "Go forth, O Christian soul," he bowed his head, as if in obedience to his superior, who pronounced them; and, joining his hands, sweetly yielded up his soul to God, on the feast of Our Lady of Mercy, in the year seventeen hundred and twenty-one, of his age the sixty-sixth, fifty-one whereof had been spent in the order of St. Francis.

Of the veneration and fame of sanctity which his virtues excited in the minds of all, especially when his mortal remains were consigned to the tomb, it is not within our purpose to speak; but a

few of his many miracles are here set down, for the instruction and edification of those who shall read the same. Out of the many that are contained in the acts of his beatification, we select two, which have received the approval of the Holy See.

Sebastian Pasqualini, a miller of the city of Matelica, while attempting to raise a sluice, which closed in one of the main streams of the water that supplied his mill, fell backwards, and fractured both bones of his left leg. He was carried home to bed; and the surgeon, having examined the fracture, endeavoured to restore the bones to their natural position; but, after trying all the resources of his art for forty days, he gave up the cure in despair. The patient remained in this state for three months, until he was advised to have recourse to the intercession of B. Pacificus. He was placed on a horse by his wife and friends, who observed that the fracture was not yet healed, both from the motion of the lower part of the leg, as if there had been a joint at the fractured part, and from the rattling of the bones against one another, and from the internal pain occasioned by the motion of the horse. In this manner they went slowly on their way, until they were within about five hundred yards of the church, where the body of the saint was preserved, when Sebastian felt as if he were deprived of his senses, while the horse bore him, at a brisk pace, to the door of the church.

Forgetting his lameness, he dismounted boldly, walked, examined his leg, and found it completely healed, without either pain, or any mark of the fracture remaining. He returned devout thanks to the saint, and, walking home, resumed his hard and laborious employment.

The second miracle is the cure of Maria Frances Riccetto. In the seventy-fourth year of her age, she was attacked by a paralytic stroke, which not only distorted her mouth, and totally deprived her of speech, but brought on a *hemiplegia*, or complete paralysis of the whole of the left side of her body. She was placed in bed, and the parish priest, being summoned to attend her, thought it time to administer the last sacraments. The surgeon, however, bled her in the right arm, and she was so much relieved, that her mouth gradually returned to its natural position; and her speech was restored, and even the paralysis in the left side began to leave her. But, while its symptoms disappeared in the rest of the body, the paralytic affection discharged its whole force into the left arm, which was at once deprived of both sensation and motion. The evil went on increasing, until the flesh and muscles were consumed, and the skin became yellow and disgusting to the sight. The unfortunate patient was obliged to carry her arm in a sling. The curate, moved to compassion at the sight of her sufferings, advised her to have recourse to the

powerful intercession of St. Pacificus. A relic of the saint was placed upon the withered limb, and, at the very moment that the sign of the cross was made over it, the arm resumed its vigour and motion, the muscles were restored, and the skin resumed its natural colour, and she retained the full use and freedom of motion thereof until her death.

The cause of the beatification of the servant of God, was brought before Benedict XIV, in 1752, and was by him referred to the Congregation of Rites in the following year. The Cardinal Duke of York was appointed reporter; and, under his auspices, and those of Monsignor Charles Erskine (afterwards Cardinal), *Promotore della Fede*, the decree for his beatification was issued by Pius VI in 1785.

## ST. VERONICA GIULIANI.

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1660—1727.

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“THERE are often found, in the lives of those who enjoy a reputation for sanctity, certain extraordinary marks, which the profane rashly and foolishly scoff at, as empty and dreamy visions; and the inexperienced multitude, on the other hand, receives as irrefragable proofs of virtue: nor are those wanting, who, misled by a deceitful semblance of prudence and caution, blindly pronounce them the result of artifice and cunning. The prudent man avoids all these extremes; and, whilst he silently admires things beyond the reach of ordinary understandings, inquires into their causes; but, still, not from such effects does he decide upon the virtues of those in whom they are conspicuous, but looks chiefly to the conduct and actions they have produced in them, that from the fruits, as our Divine Master teacheth, the quality of the tree

may be known.”\* We earnestly beseech the devout reader to bear these words in mind, whilst he is reading the life of her of whom they were first spoken; and in the wonderful history which we are about to relate, let him not decide, until he shall have carefully considered, not only the events themselves, but how, in every case, the graces which the servant of God received, are not only remarkable signs of Divine favour, but ever produced in her heart deeper humility and more ardent charity, and a wish to conceal them from the eyes of men; and that they were particularly communicated to her during prayer; and when, to the desire of suffering for the sake of Jesus Christ, she added the most rigorous mortification of her flesh; all which the immortal pontiff, Benedict XIV, has laid down as criterions whereby to determine the reality of such supernatural gifts. In order to glorify his servant, it pleased God, during her lifetime, to make known her virtues and the graces which He had conferred upon her, to many of her companions, and to no less than four bishops of the city wherein she lived, and thirteen religious men of various orders, who were her directors, by whom an exact and faithful record of all her actions has been handed down to us. From their attestations, and other authentic accounts, the following nar-

\* Pius VI. Decree approving the virtues of the Ven. Veronica Giuliani. April, 1796.

rative has been formed of actions and virtues which many volumes would not be sufficient to detail.

Saint Veronica Giuliani was born on the Feast of St. John the Evangelist, in 1660, at Mercatello, in the States of the Church. She received in baptism the name of Ursula, for God destined her, like our own holy martyr, to be a virgin and the leader of many other virgins to the kingdom of heaven. In her very infancy her future sanctity was foreshadowed; for on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, which the Church keeps as days of penance, she would never take nourishment, save a small quantity in the morning and the evening: and before she was six months old, seeing a picture representing the Most Blessed Trinity, in whose honour that day was dedicated (12th June, 1661), she left her mother's arms of her own accord, and, without any assistance whatever, walked to it, and with many signs of reverence, remained as if enchanted before it;\* and being carried, at the age of a year and a half, to a shop, by a servant, who wanted some oil, in selling which the shopkeeper used a false measure, her tongue was loosed, and she cried out, in a clear voice, "Act fairly, for God sees you." At the age of three years these seeds of virtue began to develop themselves still more. They produced in her

\* De Canoniz. lib. iii. cap. 12.

those extraordinary feelings of love and affection towards Our Blessed Saviour and his Virgin Mother, which have only been communicated to the most favoured souls. When she was about four years of age, her mother fell so dangerously ill, that the Viaticum was brought to her. The moment the priest entered the house, Ursula saw such a bright light surrounding him, that she ran to him, and earnestly begged to receive the blessed sacrament. To keep her quiet, she was told that there were no more particles left; but she at once answered, that he might safely break a portion off that intended for her mother, because, as the mirror, when broken, does not cease to reflect the images that it represented when entire, so is Jesus equally present in the smallest fragment as well as in the entire host from which it has been separated. As soon as her mother had communicated, she sprang upon the bed, exclaiming, "O what sweet things you have had!" And coming near her mouth, she said, "O what a sweet scent!" Nor could the attendants succeed in making her leave her mother in peace. Before her death, she called her five children to her bed-side, and recommended each of them to one of the five wounds of the passion. To Ursula she gave that in our Saviour's side; to which the devotion of her after-life was directed, and through it she received those many graces of which we shall afterwards speak. On



the night following her mother's death, she refused to go to bed, until the servants placed a picture of Our Lady and Jesus upon the bed, when she immediately lay down and slept peacefully.

Even at that tender age, she began to give models of that love of her neighbour, and desire of mortification, which formed the characteristic virtues of her life. She always reserved a part of her food, to give to the poor; and once, when a pilgrim begged an alms, not knowing what else to give, she took off one of the new shoes she had just put on, and gave it to him. He told her, that it could be of no service to him without the other; and in the same spirit, she gave him that likewise. A twofold prodigy showed that this act was pleasing to God; for the second shoe having stuck fast on the arch over the doorway, the pilgrim rose to more than human height to reach it; and Our Lady appeared soon after to her, with the shoes in her hand, shining with rich jewels, and told her, that in the person of the pilgrim she had received them, and her Divine Son had adorned them in that manner. Her love of mortification was still more remarkable. When she was about three years old, she heard an account of the sufferings of the saints, and especially of the martyrs,—when she instantly ran and placed her hands in a fire, whence she did not draw them out until the whole family had been brought by the smell into the room. Of this cir-

cumstance she wrote in later life,—“ I do not remember very distinctly, but it seems to me that at that moment I did not feel even the burning, for I was out of myself with the pleasure that I experienced ; although I afterwards suffered pain when my hands had been drawn out of the fire. Every body in the house was lamenting, but I do not remember shedding a tear.”

At the age of seven she was admitted to the sacrament of Confirmation, and, during the ceremony, her godmother saw her guardian angel by her side. Similar visions, which occurred in the seventh or eighth year of her age, we have recorded in her own words :—“ I remember,” she says, “ that when I was about seven or eight years old, twice during the Holy Week, Jesus appeared to me covered with wounds ; and telling me to be devout to His most holy passion, instantly disappeared. I wept bitterly, and every time that I heard speak of the torments and sufferings of Our Lord, I felt something at my heart ; and every thing that I undertook I offered up in honour of His passion. A desire came into my head of asking my confessor for some mortification, but I did not yield to it. Still I made sufferings for myself, but all without my confessor’s leave ; such as the discipline, walking on my bare knees, pricking myself with a pin, kissing some filthy spot, and beating myself with thistles. If I heard of the works of penance per-

formed by others, I went to the image of my Saviour, and said, 'Lord, if I had their instruments of mortification, I would do the same; but since I have them not, I offer Thee my desire.' He has often let me know and remember that He made me (at that age) affectionate invitations. Thus, for example, when I had determined on taking some recreation, and could never find time to do so, I heard Jesus in my interior, asking me, 'What dost thou seek, what dost thou desire? I am thy real contentment;' and I at once replied, 'Lord, for Thy sake I will deprive myself of the pleasure which I sought.' How these answers were uttered, I know not; but this I know, that I did make them. . . . Sometimes, whilst I was gazing at the crucifix, Jesus spoke to my heart, and said, 'I will be Thy guide and spouse;' and I stretched out my arms, and exclaimed, 'I will be Thy spouse, and no one shall move me from it. I promise it with all my heart; grant that I may never separate myself from Thee.'"

Her father having obtained a lucrative situation at Placentia, removed thither with his family. In that city, Ursula, who was about ten years old, made her first communion, on the feast of the Purification, in 1670. When she had received Our Lord, she felt an unusual fire burning within her breast, which continued after her return home; so that thinking it to be an ordinary effect in all com-

municants, she, in her innocent way, asked her sisters how long it generally lasted. But perceiving, from their surprise, that it was a special grace imparted by her Saviour, she did not again speak of it, but endeavoured to receive the holy sacrament of love as frequently as possible.

At this time the gift of mental prayer was communicated to her. In what manner she received it, the following account, which she wrote afterwards, by the command of her directors, will explain:—"When I was about twelve years of age, I think, a desire frequently came into my mind, of placing myself in mental prayer; but I did not know how to set about it. It seemed mere folly to ask my confessor to instruct me in it, because he knew my wickedness; and I thought that none ought to apply to it except the good, and those who are really inclined to virtue; but in myself there was nothing but inconstancy, and want of perseverance. I went on making my altars, although, while I was making them, I felt at times an application of my mind to prayer. As soon as I had finished, I knelt down before them, and remained on my knees for a long time; but what I did I know not, for I was, so to speak, out of myself. I felt such pleasure, that I should not have cared to eat or do any thing else. I desired that all creatures should love and honour God. I ran to ask my sisters to come and sing with me. They did so,

and I felt great comfort therein. As soon as my father returned home, I led him to my altar, and induced him to say some prayers with me. When the Nativity drew near, I could not contain myself for joy; and several times, whilst I was looking at the representation of Our Lord in the crib, I think I saw Him surrounded with glory; He drew me to a union with Himself, but I know not how. Of this I spoke to no one, nor did I derive any profit therefrom, for I soon returned to my usual childish follies. On the day of communion, all my delight was to be about my altar. Although I knew not how to pray mentally, my mind became all recollected in God: I seemed to feel my Lord in a special manner within my heart. I placed myself in prayer; and the longer I was employed therein, the longer I wished to remain. I had a certain interior light that showed me the inconstancy of worldly things, and I was inclined to abandon every thing. I knew no other good but God. These considerations strengthened my desire of becoming a religious. The desire of suffering, I think, I had from my infancy, and afterwards; but, alas! it profited me in nothing. I had no sooner left the altar, than I set about annoying some one or other.

“Although I sought amusement in worldly diversions, I felt my mind wholly turned to God. As well as I can remember, the passion of my

Redeemer moved me very much ; at times even to tears. The more I exercised myself in mental prayer, the more tedious I found the things of the world. At times, I had some particular insight into myself ; but this I did not mention to my confessor. It is true that such lights made me advance farther than ever in the way of prayer ; and, in order that I might not be observed, I told the servant to call me early in the morning ; she did so, and I rose at once. I remained in prayer for several hours, but what I did I cannot relate. I know that I was out of myself, and felt a willingness and desire to be employed in all the work of the house, but this was forbidden, lest it should injure me. I seldom rose up from prayer, before I had been told by the Lord that I was to be His spouse. Still I remained steadfast in my desire of entering a religious order, and this desire increased daily. When a festival occurred, I felt a flame in my heart, which set my whole soul on fire. I could not remain quiet, I ran about the house as if I were mad, and made people laugh at me. Sometimes all my delight was in making altars ; and although, in my uncle's house, this was not so easy as at home, I never left off making them. For work I had not much inclination, but I could do as much in an hour as another in a day. I did not care to learn anything, but whatever I saw done, I found myself able to do, and succeeded

when I set about it. I was the torment of every body, and yet all wished me well, and liked me better than my sisters. When I thought of this, it surprised me beyond measure. No one spoke harshly to me; and yet I performed all sorts of naughty tricks. I was naturally hasty, and whenever I was vexed, I stamped and beat the ground like a horse; and, believe me, I did so through mere wickedness, for no one ever provoked me to it. At times I took a thing into my head, and wished it to turn out as I desired. I felt an internal reproach for not mortifying myself, but I paid no attention to it. It seemed to me, that whenever I placed myself in prayer, God gave me to understand what he wished me to do; but I thought it was a mere fancy of my own, although the same light returned to my soul. It improved me much in virtue, and I began to accustom myself to silence, which enabled me to apply better to prayer; and although I did not mortify myself, I was encouraged to do so. Thus, by degrees, I became more and more in love with suffering. Oftentimes I rose during the night, and spent a short time in prayer; I had a peculiar affection for it, which led to *application*, but not to *recollections*.\* In the manner here described I spent the two last years

\* The reader will observe that this word is used in the Saints' writings in the sense of elevated, and almost extatic, union with God, in prayer and contemplation.

that I remained in the world, that is, the fourteenth and fifteenth of my age. Still I gave way to many vanities, and often felt satisfaction in them ; but, at the same time, I felt the internal reproach, which did not let me rest until I had withdrawn from many amusements which I was used to seek."

These were the beginnings of those high gift of prayer and contemplation to which she afterwards attained ; but it must not be supposed that the exercise of them was at all times attended with comfort and delight to her soul ; for her writings mention the violent repugnance of the flesh, the strong temptations, the obscurity of mind, and dryness of affection, with which she had to contend in the struggle between the world and grace.

Besides these interior trials, her perseverance and constancy to her Virgin Spouse were put to the most severe test, in the endeavours made by her father and other relations to induce her to join in the vain and idle occupations of others in her state of life, and to yield to their repeated arguments and even snares, to induce her to enter the married state. "Our father wished," she writes, "that I should be more finely dressed than others, and one day I wore one vanity, and another day another. He was so fond of me, that, when at home, he would always have me beside him. All this I complied with. But I began to perceive that he was not willing that I should become a nun, and he



told me I must marry, and that as long as he lived I must not leave him. But this news filled me with sorrow, because every time he spoke in this manner, I felt a stronger desire of being a nun. I told others so, but no one would believe me, and every body was against my intention, especially my father, who even shed tears, and told me positively that he would never consent; and in order to drive the thought out of my head, he brought other gentlemen into the house and then called me. In their presence, he promised me all sorts of pleasures and amusements, and they did the same. They talked about the things of the world, in order to persuade me to set my fancy upon them, but their discourses led me to a contrary desire. At that moment, worldly things appeared so disgusting, that I could not hear them mentioned; and more than once I told these persons that they must not speak again on such subjects, because the more I heard, the more my soul was withdrawn from them. But all that I said, availed me nothing; every day my martyrdom was renewed. I had patience for some time; but at last, I declared in their presence that such discourses disgusted me, and before them all, I expressed my deep commiseration for the wretchedness of the unfortunate persons who are attached to worldly things. I spoke as little as possible, because I knew that my father took great delight in hearing me talk, and I did everything in my

power to diminish his attachment, by avoiding all those actions in which he took delight; but all to no purpose; his affection seemed to increase daily. At times, he said to me, 'I wish to content you in every thing; the only thing I beg of you is that you will not turn nun.' With these words, he wept through affection. I said to him, 'If you wish to content me, I do not want any other favour from you, except that you would put me in a convent; all my desires are there. Content me in this, and you will content me in every thing else, and depend upon it, it will be a source of comfort to yourself afterwards.' "

Her father, finding all his efforts unsuccessful, sent her to live with her uncle, whom he secretly instructed to use all his influence and artifice to dissuade her from her design. Here she had an illness, for which the physicians could discover no remedy; until some of her attendants, perceiving that she grew sensibly better, whenever they talked of nuns and convents, informed her father, who thereupon gave up his opposition to her entreaties, and, as soon as he had allowed her to choose the convent in which she would be professed, she rose from her bed, and all symptoms of sickness immediately disappeared.

She then begged him to allow her to enter the rigorous convent of capuchinesses at Città di Castello, and was conducted by her uncle to the bishop

of the diocese, to obtain his permission. He told them that all the places in the convent were filled up, and they left him, to return home. But Ursula besought her uncle to return with her to his presence, where, falling on her knees, she prayed him in such earnest accents to comfort her by granting her request, that he was inclined to make an exception in her favour. He put several questions to her, and asked her amongst the rest, if she knew Latin. Her uncle at once replied in the negative, but Ursula, full of confidence in God's aid, took up the breviary, and read it with the most correct pronunciation; and although she had never studied Latin, she was able, during the rest of her life, to quote the texts of Scripture with perfect aptness and propriety. The bishop accordingly granted her leave to enter the convent, into which she was admitted on the 17th of July, 1677, and was clothed on the Feast of SS. Simon and Jude, in the same year. The devil sought to weaken her love of her new state, by representing it as one leading to despair: at one time, he filled her imagination with the remembrance of the many proposals of marriage and the young men that she had rejected; at another, he made the time of prayer tedious and disgusting to her. "It seemed," she says, "as if all hell were let loose against me, but I heeded it not. When I felt more than usually agitated by their attacks, I went alone into my cell, and there

poured out my soul in prayer to God, and represented my necessities to Him. Sometimes I offered up acts of prayer, and besought Him not to desert me; and said to Him, full of faith, 'My God, Thou knowest that I am Thy spouse, grant, therefore, that I may never be separated from Thee. Now, for ever, I place myself in Thy hands; I am ready for whatever Thou shalt command. I am Thine, I am Thine, that is enough.'" God did not fail to strengthen her, by saying to her heart, "Fear not, thou art mine. It is my will that thou shouldst suffer and combat; fear not." At her clothing, she took the name of Veronica, by which we shall henceforth call her.

We pass over the numerous instances of suffering and obedience which she gave during her novitiate; at the end of which she was admitted to make her profession on All Saints' day, 1678. Her writings contain many allusions to the joy which she derived from the recurrence of this day of solemn renunciation of the world and dedication of herself to her Heavenly Spouse. The first years she passed in the order were distinguished by the most extraordinary marks of Divine grace; all of which produced in her, compunction and sorrow for her sins, and love of mortification, and the cross of Christ. The Devil sought to disturb her, by throwing her on the ground, and striking her in the face, and imitating the clanking of chains

and the hissing of serpents in the church and in her cell, so that the other nuns came one day to beg of her to make less noise. One of her raptures she thus describes: "The first time that I had these *recollections* with a vision, it seemed to me that I saw, on a sudden, Our Lord with a heavy cross on His shoulders, when He invited me to take a part in that precious treasure. This invitation was given by communication rather than by words. At that instant I felt a strong desire of sufferings, and it seemed that the Lord planted the cross in my heart, giving me to understand the value of suffering. This understanding I received in the following manner. It appeared as if all sorts of torments were represented to me, and, at the same moment, I saw them transformed into jewels and precious stones, all of which were made in the figure of the cross. During this time, I was given to know that God wished pure suffering in me; and then the vision disappeared. When I came to myself, I felt a violent pain in my heart, which has never since left me, and so eager was my desire of suffering, that I would willingly have faced every torment that can be conceived. From that moment I have ever had in my mouth these words, 'The cross and sufferings are jewels and joys.'" From this account it may be collected, that, on this occasion, Jesus impressed that visible mark of the cross upon her heart, which was seen, after

her death, by several persons, when her body was opened for that purpose.

Veronica was successively appointed to fill every office of the community, in all of which she displayed the same wonderful examples of virtue, and love of obedience and suffering; and many signs of Divine favour proved to her sisters how pleasing her actions were to Almighty God. Thus, while she was housekeeper, the cheese, eggs, and fish were miraculously multiplied, as the lay-sister, who had the care of them, attests; and so firm was the confidence which all placed in her prayers, that, whenever any provisions were wanting, they applied to her, and in an instant every deficiency, either in quantity or quality, was remedied. She was appointed Mistress of the Novices, in her thirty-fourth year, and continued for twenty-two years in that office, until she was chosen abbess, in 1716; and even then, so extraordinary had been the efficacy of her prayers, and zeal in the discharge of it, that her sisters forced her, contrary to the usual order, to retain it during the eleven years she was abbess. More than once, to free them from sickness, and other inconveniencies, she obtained of God, that she might suffer in their stead; and some of them were relieved by her, in their anxiety and trouble of mind, which had been supernaturally made known to her. On one occasion was revealed to her the severe judgment which God

will make of superiors and directors of religious communities, by whose fault any relaxation of fervour creeps amongst those committed to their care. On the 9th of November, she fell dangerously ill, and, during the agony which succeeded, was carried in spirit before the throne of the Divine Judge. She beheld Christ, with a severe countenance, seated on a throne of majesty, surrounded by angels; Our blessed Lady on one side, and her patron saints on the other. When her good angel presented her to the awful judgment, she expected to be condemned to hell,—so severe, she tells us, were the reproaches of the Judge, and so unprovided was she with good works; but so earnest were the prayers of Mary, and of her holy advocates, that the divine countenance of Christ at last grew calm; and, after giving her various salutary admonitions, He dismissed her with a tender embrace. For the instruction of all, we here give, in her own words, her *Vision of the Judgment of God*, which she wrote in 1717: “The Divinity becomes the mirror of the soul. She sees what she is, how she is fallen, and why she is fallen so low. In the glass of the Divinity, she sees herself covered with abomination, and hideous to her very self. O that she could hide herself under the earth, and fly from the sight of God, that flashes vengeance! Everything she perceives in herself, makes her wish to fly, but, by the just judgment of God, she re-

mains immoveable, without the power of speech. . . . The fear and awe, which my soul felt in that tremendous judgment, I can, neither by words nor by comparison, sufficiently describe. The mind of man cannot picture it; because, even if we could penetrate things the most frightful and most awful, we should never be able to understand the terrors of that judgment. By experience each one shall know it." On the morning after her agony, she called her novices; and, having obtained leave from her confessor to speak to them respecting their failings, and her own negligence in correcting them, which had been revealed to her during her vision of judgment, she whispered to them with such earnestness, that they burst into a flood of tears, and, at the end, she said to them, "Do not learn of me, who have been the scandal of all in all my conduct; for in the observance of the rules, as well as in obedience, love and charity, I have been ever proud and devoid of humility." The nuns interrupted her with tears and sobs, charging themselves with the fault, in not having followed her instructions; but she rejoined, "take heed of little things, for, before God, things are very different from what we suppose."

We must now pass to the sublime novitiate and preparation of grace, by which she became, during the last thirty-five years of her life, an exact image

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of Our crucified Lord. In the year 1693, she beheld, in a vision, a mysterious chalice or cup, which she knew to be the presage of the Divine passion, whereof she was to be a perfect copy. This vision was repeated in various forms during the following years. At one time, the chalice appeared upon a bright cloud, surrounded with glory; at another, without any ornament: sometimes the liquor contained in it, boiled and ran over in great abundance; at other times, it issued from it, drop by drop. Her spirit was ready to quaff it to the bottom, but the flesh shuddered and drew back, as did Our Lord's in the garden; but she subdued it by severe mortifications. "I must not be too confident," she writes, "because I know that, as yet, it is not dead. The spirit I have always found eager and desirous of drinking it, and willing to taste of such bitterness, in order to fulfil the will of God. At times I felt these desires, and I exclaimed: 'When will the hour come, O my God, when Thou wilt allow me to drink of Thy cup? I await Thy will, but Thou alone knowest my thirst: I thirst, I thirst, but not for comforts, but for bitterness and sufferings.' I felt that I could wait no longer. One night, whilst I was in prayer, being quite out of myself, it seems that Our Lord appeared to me, who, holding the cup in His hand, said: 'This is for thee, and I present it to thee,

that thou mayest taste, as much as I have tasted, for thy sake, but not yet. Prepare thyself, for thou also shall taste it.' He then disappeared, leaving the remembrance of that chalice so deeply impressed on my mind, that it has ever since remained there."

At the same time were revealed to her the persecutions and agony of mind and body to which she was to be subject. On the feast of the Assumption, Our blessed Lady appeared to her, and, receiving a chalice from her son, presented it to Veronica; and the holy virgins, St. Catharine of Sienna, and St. Rose of Lima, exhorted her to accept it. On St. Augustine's day, she beheld Our Saviour seated on a throne of glory, attended by a troop of blessed spirits, and the holy Doctor, turning to her with a chalice in his hand, said, "This is a precious gift, since it is presented to thee by Almighty God Himself." At that moment, the liquor began to boil and run over on every side, which was collected by the angels in vessels of gold, and presented to our Lord. Veronica, asking the meaning of the vision, was answered, that by the liquor were signified her torments for the love of God; and by the golden vessels, wherein it was collected, the value of her suffering. "Feeling myself," she says, "in such agony that I could stand no longer, I went into the church, and threw myself before the blessed sacrament, offering myself afresh wholly

to Him; and, in an instant, I fell into a recollection, wherein Our Lord presented Himself to me. The manner in which it happened, I cannot describe, only He said to me, 'Be firm and fear not. I am thy helper, look at me.' With these words, He gave me to behold His most sacred humanity, as it was during the scourging at the pillar. As my Saviour stood thus weltering in blood, and covered with wounds, He presented the chalice, saying to me, 'See, my beloved, look at these wounds, which are so many mouths, inviting thee to drink this bitter cup. I give it thee, and I wish thee to taste it.' I felt strengthened in spirit, and also in the flesh. An internal peace remained, with an ardent desire of fulfilling the will of God, and gratifying Him in all things."

The anxiety and dread inspired, by the constant appearance of this cup before her mind's eyes, threw her into a violent fever, which was succeeded by such weakness of body, that her superiors forced her to submit to the prescriptions and treatment of physicians, which served only to increase her torments. The devils, also, threw their share into the ingredients of her cup. One night they held her in a frozen bath for two hours. She remained deprived of sense and motion, which being perceived by the infirmarians, they applied fire and fomentations to her body,—all which added to her sufferings. Sometimes they surrounded her with phantoms of licen-

tious youths, to lead her into sin, and awful spectres to daunt her; they bound her with chains, and lashed her with scourges, as if they would drag her to hell, crying out, with shouts of triumph, "thou art ours, thou art ours." But she courageously called upon them to torment her still more, "Add torments to torments, glory, glory to the cross, glory to sufferings."

But the most sensible torment was, the privation of the light of God. "All these sufferings were a mere nothing in comparison with what I experienced in myself, deserted, abandoned in blackest darkness, at such a distance from God, that I could not even breathe nor sigh to God. . . . O, intolerable agony of the soul! to see herself stript of every support, and utterly separated to a distance from its Sovereign Good. She sighs, but is not heard, she calls her Spouse, but He comes not; she seeks Him, but he flies still farther off; she prays to Him, but He will not hear. . . . My soul was in such torment, that the agony of death cannot, I think, be more bitter. I had no relief, save in seeing the cup approach nearer and nearer . . . . God be praised! for His love, all is little. Welcome the naked cross, welcome pure suffering. I am ready for all things to give delight to my Lord, and to fulfil His divine will."

God recompensed her readiness to drink the chalice of sufferings, by making her a partaker of

the torments of His passion. On the fourth of April, 1694, as near as can be ascertained, He appeared to her, and presented her with His crown of thorns. In obedience to her confessor, she thus describes her vision. "On the fourth of April, whilst I was in prayer during the night, I fell into a recollection, and in it had an intellectual vision, wherein Our Lord appeared to me, with a large crown of thorns upon His head. Immediately I cried out, 'My spouse, give me a part of these thorns, I deserve them, not Thou, my Sovereign Good.' I heard Him reply, 'I am now come to crown thee, my beloved;' and then He took the crown off His head, and placed it upon mine. The pain I suffered, at that instant, was so excessive, that I have never, as far as I can understand, suffered anything like it. It is true, that at that time it was made known to me, that this crowning was a manifest sign that I was to be espoused to the Lord; and that, for this reason, He wished me to share in all His torments, so that I might be called the Spouse of God crucified, and, therefore, I also was to be crucified with my divine Spouse. Every thorn that I felt in my head, was a fresh invitation to me. On the same day, I was promised all the renewals of this crowning. But it seemed to me that such suffering was a great joy to me; I felt as if I should die, if I had not some torment to undergo."

Finding herself unable to go through her ordinary duties, and being anxious, at the same time, to conceal these divine favours from her companions, she prayed to God,—“ My God, I beseech Thee, if it be Thy will, to give me strength to perform the work and other duties prescribed for me, and let these Thy graces never be manifest, but always in secret.” We pray the reader to observe how exactly all the prayers of Veronica, and the effects produced in her soul, are conformable to the rules, whereby Benedict XIV teaches us to judge of the truth or falsehood of such supernatural favours as she received. They are always communicated during prayer; they excite in her a more ardent desire of undergoing still greater torments for the sake of God,—they lead above all to humility and anxiety to hide them from the eyes of the world. Let us now see how another of his criterions corresponds with the reality of her visions and other graces; we mean how they inflamed her with burning charity and zeal for the glory of God, and the conversion of sinners. “ This pain (of the crown of thorns) inspired me with such compassion for sinners, that, offering to the Eternal Father all the sufferings of Jesus, and all His merits with those of Our Lady for the conversion of sinners, I prayed more earnestly than ever for sufferings, telling God that I wished to be mediatrix between Him and sinners, and begging Him to send me more

torments. At that instant, I felt a fresh renewal of the crown of thorns, not only round my head, as usual, but all over it; and, for several hours, I remained rejoicing amid thousands of torments. It is only a few days since I had this renewal, and it was signified to me, at the same time, that this was a warning that I was to spend this Lent in continual suffering. God be praised! Every thing is little for His sake!"

This crowning was renewed several times during the course of her life. Her directors, being informed that it had taken place, commissioned Sister Florida Ceoli to observe if there were any visible marks of it on her head. She deposed, on oath, as follows:—"I visited her, and saw that she had upon her forehead something like a circle, tending to a red colour. Sometimes I have observed upon it certain pimples, about the size of a pin-head, in the form of little buttons. At other times she had her forehead sprinkled with marks of a purple colour all round, like the figure of thorns, which came down towards the eyes; and, in particular, I saw one of these marks, like thorns, come down towards the right eye, and even passed quite under it, filling it with tears; and I saw that the tears were blood, from the veil wherewith she wiped them away; as I have frequently told her confessors, who enjoined me to watch her."

But, not content with these observations made

by her companions, and wishing fully to ascertain if such effects proceeded from natural or supernatural causes, the bishop of the city caused her to be placed under the care of physicians and surgeons; but, after they had exhausted all the resources of their art, and applied remedies so cruel and so violent, that none of the sisterhood would assist at them, but left Veronica herself to hold the heated instruments for them, they abandoned the attempt; and the bishop and her directors were persuaded that He alone, who had imprinted such marks of love upon His servant, was capable of curing them, and that He had thereby wished to render her more and more conformable to Himself.

The sacred Scriptures use the word *espousals* to denote a more intimate union formed between God and the soul by the most perfect love. In the book of Canticles the Holy Ghost describes the correspondence of a soul with grace, under the figure of two spouses; and in the New Testament, Our Lord speaks of the virgins whom He admits to His heavenly marriage-feast. This spiritual union with certain devout souls God has been pleased to make manifest to them by more sensible signs, accompanied by formalities like those used in ordinary marriages. Of such we read in the life of the extatic St. Catherine of Siena. To this exalted dignity God was pleased to raise



Veronica, as He revealed to her, during the crowning with thorns, of which we have already spoken. But He prepared her for it by several visions, of which we will allow herself to speak :—

“ While I was one morning at mass, suddenly an *application* came upon me. During the course of it, I felt certain touches in my heart, which excited me to a strong desire of uniting myself wholly to God. On a sudden, it seems to me that God took me out of my senses, and, by communication, gave me to know, *ab intra*, that He wished to be espoused to me. This news made my heart leap anew, and I felt it burning within me. With this excitement was displayed to me all that I was to do, in order to make due preparation for it; and in this interval I received light to know that all this preparation was to be of pure suffering.” She protests that after this vision the simple words, “ My Divine Jesus, Spouse of my soul,” filled her soul with indescribable joy, and that she went on repeating them, like a rosary, the same number of times that the angelical salutation is therein repeated. She adds, that, in inviting her to His marriage, Jesus frequently appeared in the form of a beautiful infant; and on the Feast of the Circumcision, 1694, intimated to her that her preparation for it was to be by all kinds of sufferings. During the month of March she was troubled with great desolation and spiritual dryness. But on

the twenty-seventh of that month, Our Lord comforted her, by showing her with what delight He looked upon a beautiful jewel, fixed in the wound of His sacred side, and telling her that it had been formed of all the sufferings she had undergone for His sake. She offered herself anew to be crucified with Him, and He seemed to stoop down and embrace her soul, giving it a kiss of love. "When we return to ourselves," she concludes, "after these communications, we understand, in the most lively manner, the value of suffering, and the treasure which lies concealed amid contempt, disgrace, and humiliations. These are the lessons to be learned in this school of divine love." Two days previous, on the Feast of the Annunciation, Our blessed Lady was pleased to prepare her for her espousals. This was by an intellectual vision, as she calls such in her writings, wherein she beheld the great Queen of Angels upon a magnificent throne, accompanied by St. Catharine of Siena and St. Rose of Lima. To their prayer that she would consent to the espousal of her servant with her Divine Son, Our Lady sweetly replied, that they should be brought about. Veronica saw in her hands a beautiful ring, intended, she was told, for her. "And then, turning to these saints," she adds, "it seemed to me that Our Lady told me that I must imitate them in the most heroic virtues, especially in humility, charity,

and knowledge of myself. As she said this, it seemed to me that she communicated these virtues to me *ab intra*, and the precious treasure that lies hid in them. . . . From that day till now I have been, as it were, out of myself, and I have ever had this intimate presence of God."

During Lent she practised the most cruel mortifications and austerities; and on Holy Saturday—which in that year fell upon the tenth of April—Our Lord appeared to her; and, showing her the nuptial ring, invited her to His marriage on the following day. As a proof of the reality of these supernatural visions, let the reader observe their effects. "Here it was again made known to me," she writes, "that for this purpose a complete renewal of my soul was required. It seemed to me that Our Lord gave me a new rule of living with greater austerity; of greater silence; of working with greater fervour and love; of doing all things with purity of intention; and in His honour of refusing to gratify any natural inclination, and embracing quite the opposite; of flying human praises, and loving contempt and mortification; of being in all things a lover of the cross, and to hold it in my hand as a strong shield of defence; of being crucified in everything, and of labouring to attain all that is of the highest perfection." During the night she had three visions; in the first of which Jesus seemed to enter her heart, and to cast

out of it what the saint, in her humility, calls, “earthly things, begrimed with self-love, and disgusting to the smell,—such as human respects, and all imperfections that could impede my advancement.” In the two following visions He seemed to adorn her soul with rich furniture, which He told her were His own divine merits, given to her as her dowry. When the time of communion arrived, she felt herself more than ever inflamed with heavenly love. As she approached the altar, she heard the angels singing in sweetest melody, *Veni Sponsa Christi*; then, being rapt out of her senses, she beheld two magnificent thrones; that on the right-hand, of gold, decorated with the most splendid jewels, whereupon was seated Our blessed Lord, with his wounds shining brighter than the sun; the other formed of alabaster, of purest whiteness, and brilliant with gems, and thereon was seated Our blessed Lady, in a white mantle, of surpassing richness, who besought her Son to hasten His marriage. Innumerable were the multitudes of the Heavenly Court, in the midst whereof were the holy virgins, St. Catharine and St. Rose; the former of whom intimated to Veronica what she was to do in that most august solemnity. They conducted her slowly to the thrones, and at the foot thereof put upon her, over her religious habit, various robes, each surpassing the other in splendour. As she approached the throne of

Christ, whose garments she knows not, she says, how to describe, she beheld in each of His wounds a beautiful gem; but from that in his side, which was open, rays more bright than the sun darted on every side. In it she seemed to perceive the nuptial ring. When He raised up His hand to bless her, He intoned the words, *Veni Sponsa Christi*; and Our Lady, with the whole Court, taking them up, continued, *Accipe coronam, quam tibi Dominus præparavit in æternum*. St. Catharine then took off her rich attire, leaving only her religious habit, to show, the saint intimates, its value in the eyes of God, being allowed to appear in that glorious assembly. After remaining in this dress for a short time, Our Lord made a sign to His blessed Mother to clothe her with the nuptial garment. It was a magnificent mantle, covered with gems, and appeared of different colours. Our Lady gave it to St. Catharine, who put it upon Veronica, and placed her between the two thrones. Then, feeling herself more than ever pierced with love, she saw Our Lord take the ring out of His side, and give it to His Mother. "This ring," she writes, "shone with splendour. It appeared to me to be made of gold, but all wrought in enamel, which formed in the stone a name of the good Jesus. . . . From time to time I gave looks of love towards my Lord, and seemed to address Him, urging Him to the espousals." The Hea-

venly Queen commanded her to stretch out her hand to St. Catharine, which Jesus took, "and at that moment," she writes, "I felt myself united more closely than ever with Him. Together with Mary ever blessed, He placed the ring upon my finger, and then blessed it." In that instant, heaven again resounded with the songs of the angelic choir, after which her Divine Spouse gave her new rules of perfection, which were, she tells us, to remain wholly dead to her own will, and to live as if there were none else in the world but himself and her own soul; that she should increase her fasting and be more rigorous in her mortifications, and crucified in every thing. During this He told her He would be entirely hers.

Thus ended this mystic ceremony of her espousals; all of which she saw, she informs us, with the eyes of the soul, not of the body. She adds, that nearly at every communion, the same marriage was renewed; and that the ring remained upon her finger, and on communion-days seemed to be pressed tighter round it. It was seen also by the nuns several times; and sister Mary Spaciani attests that she saw it once, during her noviciate, distinctly with her own eyes. "It was like a circle all round the ring-finger," to use her own words, "at the very spot on which the ring is usually worn. Above, it was like a raised gem, of about the size of a pea, of a vermillion colour. . . .

When I addressed her, on such occasions, she never gave me an answer to the point; but the most wonderful circumstance is, that when I looked at her hand, a few hours afterwards, the mark was gone, and the gem, in like manner, had disappeared: and then she answered every question I put to her correctly." In the processes, two other rings are mentioned as having been given to her at the espousals, and the renewals of them,—*the ring of love, and the ring of the cross*. She received likewise another, when they were renewed on Easter Day 1697, which was enriched, according to her own account, with three gems, on one of which were engraven two hearts, joined so as to appear but one; on the other, the figure of the cross; on the third, the instruments of the Passion. The first of them, Jesus told her, indicated the union of His heart with hers; the second, His dowry of union with her soul; and the third, the remembrance she was to have of His sufferings.

On the following days of Easter Week, Jesus took her into His treasury of graces, so to speak, and made her mistress of them all, desiring her to distribute the infinite merits of His most blessed life and bitter passion; but she left them at His all-wise disposal, begging only certain graces for all directors of souls, her own confessor, and her convent. In her subsequent communions, she heard Jesus, when He entered her soul, address

the most loving words to her; and, after some account of them, she adds,—“ If I were to attempt to describe all the effects produced in the heart during the holy communion, I should never have done. It is enough to say that this is the chamber and palace of love itself. But the heart burns more than ever, when it sees that it is the temple of the most Holy Trinity; and when Jesus enters my soul, I hear the very words, ‘*Ave templum totius Trinitatis.*’ My heart seems to expand and open out, and burn, in such a way, that at times I seemed to hear in it heavenly melody and music, which took me out of myself. My heart is never more content than when it tastes of pure suffering.”

One of the commands given to Veronica, after her espousals, was that she should increase her fasting; and about a year after that event, she received a direct injunction from God to fast for three whole years, upon nothing but bread and water. But Almighty God, wishing at the same time, to put her obedience to her superiors to the test, caused them all to refuse her their permission, without which she could not put the Divine command in practice. And, although He continued to repeat His command, and even to reproach her for not fulfilling it; and although her stomach rejected every other food but bread, yet her superiors obstinately refused to accede to her petition. “ I was full of joy,” she says, “ because in this way,



I suffered much, but I felt that the flesh could bear no more." At length, after she had undergone the severest torments, from the refusal of her superiors, the weakness of her body, and her sorrow of mind, at not being able to comply with the will of God, from March to September, God was pleased to support her by milk miraculously supplied in the same manner as is related of the holy virgins, Lidwige, or Lidwina, in Holland, and Geltrude, in Belgium, by the Bollandists.

The most severe trial to which she was exposed, was from desolation and sadness of spirit, and from the bitter malice and fierce assaults of the devil against her purity, during 1696, the year after her mystic espousals. Under the month of July, we have the following: "The demons, taking the very figure of myself, performed immodest acts before my eyes, and told me that I was already damned, and that I committed many sins, which I was not to know till the hour of death, for which they reserved them, that I might die in despair. To all this was added a gloominess and agony of death, with such aridity that I could do nothing. It seemed to me that for me there was neither God nor His saints. I did my best to take courage, but all to no purpose. I said to those hellish monsters, 'Away, get you hence; I belong wholly to Jesus; I have nothing to do with you. Live the pure will of my Lord for ever!'" Under the 17th of

October, we read as follows : “ Amongst my other tribulations came this also. Whilst I was in prayer, there came upon me such, and so many evil thoughts of dishonest things and of grievous sins, and they threw me into such anguish, that at one time they covered me with perspiration, and at another made me freeze, with an internal agony, which confused and disturbed my soul. I did not wish to disquiet myself, nor to give myself trouble and pain, but I could not help it ; I felt myself so oppressed and sunk in these filthy thoughts, and my mind so completely obscured, that I could do nothing. The demon tempted me, and I seemed to hear a dreadful voice, which continually repeated, ‘ See, these are the fruits of praying for sinners. All their sins are crowding upon thy head. Do good now, if thou canst.’ As he spoke these words, the devil seemed to make merry and rejoice. O God, what torment it gave me ! As well as I could, I begged of God the salvation of souls, and I said, ‘ My sovereign good, Spouse of my soul, I do not offend Thee in will, and therefore I detest and abhor every wicked thought ; and now and for ever, I tell Thee, that my will does not wish to entertain them. Rather death, and a thousand deaths, than that I should ever consent to a single thought that can offend Thee.’ As I said this, though with great difficulty, the devil tormented me by suggesting worse thoughts than ever, and telling me that no

hope was left for me. I replied, 'Liar that thou art, I will not yield to thy falsehoods. Jesus will I love, Jesus will I serve; I have no other good but Jesus.' In this struggle I remained for several hours, always with desolation, dryness, and temptations. God be blessed for all!" The like temptations and assaults, both from her flesh and from the devil, are described under December of the same year, but she repeated, with the glorious martyr St. Cecily, *fiat cor meum et corpus meum immaculatum ut non confundar*. On Christmas eve, she made an incision upon her heart in the form of a cross, with a pen-knife. With the blood, which issued from it, she wrote a fervent protestation of love, and a dedication of her will to her infant Saviour. Four other writings, of the same kind, made during the course of that and the following year, 1697, all breathe the same feelings of consecration of her will to Jesus, and especially of ardent charity and zeal for the salvation of her neighbours, whose mediatrix she had promised to be. In one of them, she writes, "I intend at this moment to confirm all the protestations which I have made with my own blood, and anew I make myself the mediatrix between you and sinners. Lo! I am ready to give my life and blood for the conversion of sinners, and the confirmation of the Holy Faith. O my God! with your heart, with your love, I make this invitation. O souls re-

deemed with the blood of Jesus, I speak to you; O sinners, come all to the heart of Jesus, to the fountain, to the boundless sea of His love. Come, all of you, men and women, come all, leave sin; come to Jesus!" Her loving spouse rewarded her constancy and love by the wound, which He made in her heart, on the feast of His blessed nativity in that year (1696). "I seemed to see," she writes, "in the hand of the holy Infant, a rod of gold, at the point of which was, as it were, a flame of fire, and at the foot, a small piece of iron, like a little lance; and He placed this rod against His own heart, and the point of the lance in my heart, and it seemed that I felt my heart pierced through and through. In an instant, I saw nothing in His hand; but full of grace and beauty He invited me to love Him, and by way of communication, He made me understand that He had bound me to Himself by a closer tie. I understood many things, but at present, I do not remember them distinctly, and therefore I do not write them." Through modesty she abstained from looking at the wound, but she put a linen cloth upon it, which was immediately covered with blood. Her confessor ordered her to examine it, and she found it open, and observed that it was large enough to admit the blade of a good-sized knife. It was also examined by several of her companions, and confessors, as is attested in the processes. On Good Friday, the 5th of April,

1697, she received those rich pledges of love, which were vouchsafed to the seraphic St. Francis, St. Catharine, and other saints; for Our Lord, after having previously foretold these graces, and after displaying His mercies in other ways, to her, was pleased to imprint upon her hands and feet, the stigmata or wounds of His most sacred passion. These wounds were afterwards renewed upon several other occasions, and their reality was made known to many persons. For the Tribunal of the Holy Office at Rome, having received information thereof, ordered the bishop of the city to make an inquiry into the truth of the report. He repaired to the grate of the convent, with several other ecclesiastics, who severally saw the wounds, which her blessed Spouse had made. Those in the hands and feet, as Florida Ceoli and other sisters attest, were on the upper side round, and about the size of a farthing, but less on the under side, deep and red when open, and covered with a thin cicatrix or crust, when closed. The wound in the left side, above the left breast, was between four and five fingers in length, and about one finger broad in the middle, growing thinner towards the two extremities, exactly like the wound of a lance. Veronica was so alarmed at the thought of undergoing these examinations, so dreadful to her virginal modesty, that she told sister Florida Ceoli, in confidence, she should have died of confusion, if God

had not deprived her of her senses, during them. And her profound humility suggested to her to beg earnestly of her beloved Saviour to leave her the pain, but hide the marks of these wounds from the eyes of the world, as he had done to St. Catharine of Siena, and other saints; but He ordered her to tell her confessor, that these wounds were to remain, that by the rigorous inquiries of the Congregation of the Holy Office, it might be known that they had been imprinted by His divine hand; and that, for this purpose, they were to remain visible for three years. So in effect it happened; for after three years, on the 5th of April, 1700, the wounds closed, but not until it had been proved to many that they were indeed the work of divine love. But, although they were closed to the eyes of others, it is attested by several witnesses, that the pain still continued, and that they were renewed after that date upon the greater festivals of the church, the feasts of St. Francis and of his stigmata, and as often as her superiors commanded. She herself mentions their being renewed in 1703, three years after their closing; and her confessor, Father Ranier Guelfi, as late as holy Saturday, the 19th of April, 1726, having been informed by her, that Jesus had renewed her wounds twice upon that same day, commanded her to pray that they might be renewed for the third time. She obeyed, and after remaining in extacy at his feet for some

time, told him that she had obtained the grace. To his astonishment, he beheld the wounds open, and blood issuing from them. To have additional witnesses, he pretended to disbelieve her, and ordered her to show them to two of her companions, who both saw them open and covered with blood, as they testify in the process. Besides the testimony of these and the many others, both ecclesiastics and nuns, who saw these wounds, the reality of their existence was proved by the fact that the most diligent endeavours of surgeons to cure them served only to inflame them still more. But the most undoubted proof is, that she was able, in spite of them, to live and perform her duties during a space of thirty years; especially when we reflect that the physician and surgeon, who inspected her body, after her death, agreed that the wound in her left side was enough, at any instant, to have caused her death, so that they considered her very continuance in life a miracle, when they coupled their own observations with the fact, that the nuns had seen a vapour like breath coming out of it.

Besides the chalice, and thorny crown, and five principal wounds, Jesus imparted to her, as a signal mark of His affection, a participation in all the other sufferings of His passion. Of this fact we have, in addition to her own narrative, the evidence of many persons, who observed the most undoubted proofs of it in her person; such as that she

was able to carry weights and perform all her other duties, although her right shoulder was so much curved by the weight of the cross, that the surgeon attested that it was enough to hinder the free action and motion of the arm. But the strongest evidence of her participation in the sufferings of the passion, is given by Father John Mary Crivelli, of the Society of Jesus. The bishop, having been informed by her confessors that certain extraordinary contorsions, pain, rackings, and agony, which she was frequently observed to suffer, and of which the physicians were unable to discover either the cause or the remedy, arose from her being, at such times, allowed to endure the torments of Our Saviour's bitter passion, resolved to make trial whether they were the work of God, or mere illusions of the Devil. For this purpose he summoned, in 1714, the Father already mentioned, who was celebrated for his prudence and discernment in the direction of souls, and appointed him extraordinary confessor to the monastery. He caused Veronica to make a general confession, giving him an exact account of all her visions and other Divine graces; and, after carefully comparing her narration with the accounts which he received of her from the other nuns, he was enabled, by the light of God, to discover a sure criterion whereby to judge whether her soul was under the influence of God or the Devil. This was by forming five commands entirely in his own



mind; which, being purely mental, could not be discovered by the Devil, but only by Almighty God. He summoned Veronica, and ordered her to beg of God, and the Holy Virgin, to make known to her the commands he wished her to put in execution, but which he was about to form by mere acts of his will. She instantly obeyed, and placed herself in prayer before him. He then conceived in his mind, without motion of the lips, or other external manifestation, these five commands; first, that the wound in her side, which was then closed like those in her hands and feet, should open again and shed blood; second, that when open, it should remain so as long as he pleased; third, that it should close, as soon as ever he wished, in his presence, and that of as many others as he should choose; fourth, that in his presence, whenever he should think proper, she should visibly endure all the torments and pains of the passion of Our Saviour; fifthly, that after she should have endured them, stretched out upon her bed, as was usual, she should suffer them in his presence, and that of as many others as he should bring with him, standing upon her feet, or raised in the air, as he should command. At first Veronica's prayer was without success, but he commanded her to renew it; and, after a few moments, she was able to repeat to him the five commands, word for word, just as he had conceived them in

his mind. Dissembling his astonishment, he told her that words and deeds were very different things, and that he should reserve the trial of her obedience to another time. She replied that she was ready to do whatever he had commanded; "Because," said she, "I put my trust solely in the virtue of holy obedience, and in the will of God, and the assistance of the blessed Virgin." A few days afterwards he ordered her to perform the first command, which she accordingly did, and the wound was re-opened; and he proved the truth of it by making her put a white handkerchief upon it, which she gave back to him all, covered with fresh blood. Being called to Florence, he was absent for twenty-two days, and upon his return, he went with the bishop to the window of the monastery; and after examining the wound, through an incision made in her habit for the purpose, which was still open, according to the second of his injunctions, he ordered her to pray that the wound should be closed, which was instantly done, and nothing but a small spot remained. A similar trial had been made by another of her confessors with the same effects, nine years before, on the thirty-first of July, 1705. Veronica told him that she had been ordered by Our Lady to inform him that she was to perform the fourth command on St. Andrew's day, by enduring all the torments of the passion, together with those of the Seven Sor-

rows of Mary, which in fact she suffered, as she had foretold, with all their circumstances, in his presence. The fifth command was performed before Father Crivelli and the bishop, during the month of December; and it was remarkable that in the midst of her greatest extacy, or most violent agony, she exactly obeyed every new command he gave; such as that the torment she was then undergoing should cease, or that she should raise her body higher in the air. The relation of these sufferings, recorded by this learned father, presents many considerations from which much might be learned of the severity, bitterness, and terrors of the passion of Our divine Redeemer, whereof the inspired writings have given so simple and so sublime a narrative.

Veronica foretold that twenty-four marks would be found engraven upon her heart; and, by the order of her confessor, she described the exact form and disposition of them, by cutting them out in red and white paper; and after her death, they were found to correspond in every particular with the account and picture which she had made of them. They were as follows:—a Latin cross, with a C in the top of the upright piece; the centre of the transverse an F; in the right point of the transverse a V; and in the left an O. Above the cross was, on one side, a crown of thorns; on the left of which was a banner upon a staff, which passed

transversely over the cross, and the flag of the banner was divided into two tongues, on the upper of which was a large *I*, and on the lower an *m* in running hand. At the top of the banner was a flame, and, lower down, a hammer, a pair of pincers, a lance, and a reed with a sponge represented upon the top. On the right of the cross, beginning from above, was a small garment to represent the seamless vest of Our Lord, another flame, a chalice, two wounds, a column, three nails, a scourge, and seven swords; with the letters P.P.V. on other parts of the heart. All these marks were exactly described by her upon paper, which being compared with her heart, soon after death, were found to agree in every particular. Her confessor attests that the meaning of the above letters and emblems is:—The seven swords are the seven dolours of Mary; the banner, the ensign of her victories over the Devil, the world, and herself; the two letters, *I* (*J*) and *m*, Jesus and Mary; *C*, Charity; *F*, Faith and Fidelity to God; *O*, Obedience; the two *VV*, Humility and the Will of God (*Umiltà*, and *Volontà di Dio*); *PP*, Patience and Suffering (*Patire*); the two flames, the love of God and her neighbour.

But we have now reached the point towards which all her aspirations were directed; the happy moment when she was to be united to that Spouse, towards whom her soul had hastened, as the thirsty,

heart flieth to the fountains of living waters. She endured, as she had foretold, in this her last stage of more than mortal agony and bitterness, a three-fold purgatory; first, in the persecutions and harshness of men, on the part of her physicians, and those who attended her; then on the part of the devil, who tempted her to despair; and, lastly, from holy obedience; for, although she had so fervently longed for the moment wherein she was to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, it had been made known to her that she was not to die, without the command of her confessor; that so the obedience, which had been so perfect in life, might be crowned even on earth, by opening for her the gate of heavenly bliss. And, as in her burning charity, and her eager desire and incomparable endurance of suffering, as well as in the pains of His blessed passion, she had so closely copied Our Lord, so it pleased Him to make the days of her last illness, of the same number as the years of His sojourn in this vale of tears; and on the thirty-third day, to close her life by an agony of three hours, like to His own upon the cross. As she lay motionless and tranquil, her confessor perceiving that her life was drawing near its term, said, "Be glad of heart, sister Veronica, what you have so much longed for, is near at hand." As she heard these words, she gave a sign of her unspeakable joy, and then turned and fastened her eyes

upon him. He began to recite the "Recommendation of a Departing Soul," and suggest acts of virtue and resignation, without being able to understand why she looked at him with so fixed an eye. At length, enlightened by Almighty God, he recollected that she had told him that she would not wish to die, save with the leave of her superiors, and through holy obedience, which permission she now craved by the fixed and earnest eye, wherewith she regarded him. Animated, therefore, with a lively faith in God, he approached her and said: "Sister Veronica, since it is the will of God that you should now go to enjoy Him, and since it is the pleasure of His Divine Majesty, that for your departure, the leave of his minister should also be granted,—I now give it to you." Scarcely were these words uttered, than she bent her eyes in token of submission; then turning towards her spiritual daughters, as if to give them her last blessing, she bowed her head, and yielded up her soul, in the peace of the Lord, on Friday, the 9th of July, 1727, in the sixty-seventh year of her age, and the fiftieth of her religious profession.

Of her perfection in the discharge of all the duties of her state of life,—of her faith, hope, and love of God and her neighbour,—of her meekness and humility, which she practised in the most heroic degree,—it is unnecessary here to say more;

than that in them she was an exact copy of that virtue which her loving Spouse displayed in His life amongst men. Even upon earth, her sanctity was made manifest, by the accomplishment of the events which she had foretold, and by the miracles that she performed; and since her death, the most wonderful favours have been obtained by her intercession. From the many that are recorded in the acts of her beatification, we select only two. The first is that of her confidential companion and friend, sister Mary Magdalen Boscaini, who, in the course of the years 1729-30, was attacked by such a complication of disorders, that she could neither taste food, nor lie down, without considerable difficulty; she was subject to frequent fainting-fits and vomitings, and remained in this state for eleven months, being declared by her physicians to have reached an advanced stage of consumption. At last, on the vigil of St. Matthias, in 1730, eleven months since the beginning of her illness, her confessor exhorted her to place a firm reliance upon Veronica, under whom she had passed her noviciate; and when he had excited her confidence and hope, he gave her to drink some water, in which a relic of the saint had been. She drank it, and instantly sprang out of bed, and ran to see one of her sisters, who was also sick; and afterwards to meet the physician at the door, who was coming to make

his usual visit. He carefully examined her; and, after feeling her pulse, pronounced it to be a miracle, as the effect proved, for she lived twelve years longer,—when a second illness attacked her, from which she recovered, in like manner, by the intercession of Veronica; and so lived for twenty-two years more, dying in 1765. The second miracle was the sudden and perfect cure of Maria Pacciarini, of an arthritic rheumatism of long duration; from which she instantaneously and perfectly recovered, by the intercession of Veronica.

Veronica was beatified by Pius VII, in 1804, the Cardinal Duke of York being the reporter of the cause to the Congregation of Rites.

THE END.

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